

2 Home & Middle East News

Iranian newspaper denies report that Iran bought nuclear weapons

TEHRAN (AP) — An Iranian newspaper on Tuesday denied reports that Iran had purchased nuclear weapons from Russia.

An Israeli newspaper, the Jerusalem Post, said last week that Iran paid \$25 million for nuclear warheads smuggled out of the former Soviet Union in the early 1990s.

The government-controlled Iran News said the reports were an Israeli attempt to stir up anti-Iranian sentiment.

"With such anti-Iran propaganda, Tel Aviv attempts to form an anti-Iranian coalition in the Middle East, thereby overshadowing its own lack of cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)," the newspaper said.

Israel is widely believed to possess nuclear weapons and has not allowed the IAEA, the U.N. nuclear watchdog, to inspect its facilities.

Iran News also accused Israel of trying to foil Iran's nuclear research programme which, it said, was being developed for non-military purposes.

The Jerusalem Post said its reports were based on Iranian government documents.

Reacting to the reports, the U.S. Defence Department said it had "no evidence whatsoever" that Iran had acquired nuclear warheads and the Israeli foreign ministry said it had no comment.

Iran has denied any ambition to acquire a nuclear bomb. The Vienna-based IAEA says it has found no evidence that Iran is engaged in covert nuclear activity.

Russia is building Iran's first nuclear reactor, near the southern port of Bushehr.

Water shortage in Israel's Negev desert after pipeline sabotaged

DIMONA (AFP) — Saboteurs damaged the main pipeline taking water to the Negev desert region of southern Israel early Tuesday, leaving towns in the area short of drinking water, officials said.

"The main water supply line was sabotaged during the night and the flow of water into the towns is extremely low," Advia Loid, a spokeswoman for the local government council, told AFP.

A police spokesman said unknown individuals used tractors to damage part of the main pipeline leading to the Negev, spilling tens of thousands of cubic meters of water into the desert.

He said investigators were looking into the possibility the sabotage was carried out by bedouin Arabs who make up a large part of the population in the northern Negev and complain of discrimination by Israeli authorities.

Virtually all communities in the region, including Dimona — site of Israel's top secret nuclear installation — and Mitzpe Ramon were running short of water, officials said.

The regional council ordered a halt to agricultural irrigation in the region until the pipelines can be repaired.

The incident coincided with a heat wave which took the temperature in the Negev to 40 degrees Centigrade on Tuesday.

Turkish prosecutors demand five-year sentence for activist

DIYARBAKIR (AP) — Prosecutors have demanded a five-year prison term for an Italian peace activist arrested during a pro-Kurdish festival last month, reports said Tuesday.

The indictment by a regional prosecutor's office said Dino Frisullo had demonstrated in favour of the Kurdish rebel group PKK and accused him of inciting hatred based on ethnic differences, the pro-Kurdish newspaper Gundem reported.

Frisullo was arrested on March 21 during celebrations broken up by the police here, the main city in the Kurdish-dominated southeast.

Police said he was carrying documents belonging to the PKK which is banned in Turkey and shouted slogans in praise of the group.

His arrest created a diplomatic rift with Italy, which submitted a formal protest.

Nearly 37,000 people have died since 1984 in the war with the rebels, who seek autonomy.

Number of malnourished children in Sudan increasing — WFP

NAIROBI (AFP) — Increasing numbers of malnourished children are appearing in southern Sudanese feeding centres, the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) said Tuesday, warning that it was short of aircraft to supply food.

Aid agencies estimate that some 350,000 people are threatened by famine in southern Sudan, where rebels of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) have been fighting government troops since 1983.

In Bahr Al Ghazal state, where the government recently lifted a ban on aid flights imposed in early February, aid workers at the Thiek Thou-centre are feeding 1,400 malnourished children, 500 of whom are in serious condition, WFP spokeswoman Brenda Barton told AFP.

At the Pan Thou centre in the same state, she said, there were 387 malnourished children last Friday, 670 by Monday.

Mr. Barton said the WFP was able to supply only half-rations, using road transport and eight aircraft.

She said the agency needed one or two more C-130 aircraft to supplement its fleet to deliver food before the onset of the rains next month.



PALESTINIAN CHILDREN PLACE FLOWERS AT DEIR YASSIN MEMORIAL: Palestinian children place flowers on a fence Tuesday during a memorial ceremony held to mark the 50th anniversary of the massacres of Palestinians at the hands of Jewish fighters in what was in 1948 the village of Deir Yassin (Reuters photo)

14 pilgrims wounded in Hajj stampede still in Mecca hospitals

RIYADH (AFP) — Fourteen wounded Muslims from the stampede which killed more than 118 pilgrims and injured 180 others near Mecca last week are still in hospital, a Saudi health ministry official said Tuesday.

"There are only 14 wounded left" in the hospitals of Mecca, western Saudi Arabia, Abdelilah Saati told the newspaper Al-Jazira.

He said those left in hospital since last Thursday's tragedy were three Indians, two Pakistanis, an Afghan, an Indonesian, a Saudi, a Libyan, an Algerian, an Egyptian, a South African, a Syrian and a Moroccan.

The stampede occurred during a ceremony in Mina known as the "Stoning of Satan," in which pilgrims hurl pebbles at pillars representing the devil.

An estimated 700,000 pilgrims had jammed onto an overpass to throw stones at three pillars representing the devil, one of the final Hajj rituals, just before the stampede began.

Among the dead were 24 Indians, nine Turks, nine Pakistanis, seven Algerians, five Saudis, three Bangladeshis, four Moroccans, two Indonesians, two Egyptians and a Kuwaiti.

Identification has been taking time because many of the victims were not wearing identification bracelets.

Mandela expresses condolences to families of Hajj victims

AMMAN (J.T.) — South African President Nelson Mandela, in a statement issued on behalf of his office by the Department of Foreign Affairs in Pretoria, Tuesday expressed his "sincere condolences to the government and people of Saudi Arabia and the Muslims of the world for the tragedy that occurred in Mina during the Hajj."

The statement, which was sent to the Jordan Times by the South African embassy in Amman, continued: "Having had one death and a few injuries amongst the South African pilgrims, we share the profound grief and sorrow with the families from other parts of the world who have lost their loved ones during the tragic incident."

"I wish to convey my deepest sympathies to the bereaved families and pray that Almighty God gives them strength and courage to bear the great loss."

"We also pray for the speedy recovery and good health to those who were injured during the incident."

Syrian Orthodox patriarch visits Baghdad

BAGHDAD (AFP) — The patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox church, Mar Ignatius Zakka Iwas, has arrived in Baghdad on his first visit to Iraq in 16 years, the official news agency INA reported Tuesday.

As part of a month-long tour, His Holiness Mar Ignatius has already been to the northern city of Mosul, his birthplace. He travelled to Baghdad by road on Monday and was in stay two weeks.

The visit — the patriarch's first to Iraq since 1982 — has been made possible by the reopening of the Syrian-Iraqi border last year.

His Holiness Mar Ignatius himself served as bishop of Mosul from 1963 to 1969 and as bishop of Baghdad from 1969 until his election as patriarch in 1980.

Syria has allowed Iraqi clergymen of the Syrian Orthodox church to travel to the patriarchate in Damascus although its relations with Baghdad have been cut since 1980.

But they have had to travel via Amman, which was considered too long a journey for the patriarch to make, according to church officials.

Iraq has a Christian community of around 750,000 centred in Mosul and the north, and in the capital.

The area of northern Iraq around Mosul is a stronghold of eastern Christianity with many rural Christians still speaking Syriac, the modern descendant of Aramaic, the language of Christ, as their first language.

Crown Prince, Princess Sarvath return to Amman

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Crown Prince and Princess Sarvath returned to Amman Tuesday after a private visit to Jordan.

They were met at the airport by His Majesty King Hussein and members of the Royal Family, as well as government officials.

The Prince and Princess were accompanied by the Royal Highnesses Princesses Rahmah and Fawziyah.

Princess Fawziyah, who is married to Prince Helmut Kholi of the Middle East Development Bank, and Prince Helmut Kholi, who is married to Princess Fawziyah, will be in Jordan for a short stay.

Royal Jordanian Air Force signs

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Royal Jordanian Air Force has signed a contract with a foreign firm for the purchase of aircraft.

The contract is for the purchase of 12 aircraft, which will be delivered over a period of 18 months.

The aircraft will be used for training and transport purposes.

NEWS IN BRIEF

A group of Arab Israeli pilgrims leave Jordan.

The group of Arab Israeli pilgrims who performed the Hajj in Mecca, returned to Jordan via Amman.

The group consisted of 100 pilgrims, including 50 from Jordan and 50 from other Arab countries.

The pilgrims were met at the airport by officials of the Jordanian Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation.

The pilgrims will be staying in Amman for a few days before returning to their homes.

65-year-old man dies.

A 65-year-old man died of a heart attack in Amman.

The man was a resident of Amman and was well-known in the community.

His death was a great loss to his family and friends.

Iraq's second city struggles to save landmark leaning tower from collapse

By Steve Kirby
Agence France Presse

MOSUL — A leaning tower that has dominated the skyline of Iraq's second city for even longer than its more famous counterpart in the Italian city of Pisa is in danger of falling down, geologists say.

The Leaning Minaret of the Great Mosque in this city 350 kilometres north of Baghdad was completed in 1172 A.D., two years before work started on the bell tower of Pisa Cathedral.

Over the centuries its two-metre lean has become such a familiar landmark that Iraqis sometimes refer to the country's northern capital as Al Hadba, the Arabic for hunchback.

But despite an expensive two-year restoration project less than 20 years ago, the soil is still moving beneath the minaret and large cracks now riddle its base.

"It's in danger of collapsing altogether if the soil beneath is not grouted," said geologist Issam Abdul Fatah, who has been surveying the extent of the problem for Mosul region's directorate of antiquities.

"Six metres beneath the ground, the soil around the minaret's foundations has moved by about a centimetre."

"That represents a displacement of more than three centimetres at ground level," he said pushing his fingers into one of the fissures to prove the point.

"The soil movement has cracked the new foundations put up in 1980 — the metal rods they used to strengthen the base have simply snapped."

Mr. Abdul Fatah heads a team of surveyors from the geotechnical survey office of the state-owned Euphrates Company.

The team normally works on irrigation projects for the ministry of agriculture and is taking time out from the Baddush dam project on the Tigris River near the city to carry out the work.

The Iraqi geologist is full of praise for the unknown twelfth-century architect whose handiwork he has been surveying for the last month.

At 56 metres, the Leaning Minaret is the highest in Iraq according to the Tourism Board guidebook "Religious Sites in Iraq," one of the few published by Baghdad since the 1991 Gulf war.

Built for the Zengid emir of Mosul, Nureddin Al Atabaki, over just two years between 1170 and 1172 A.D., the minaret was actually built with a deliberate lean.

"It was built leaning towards the east," said Mr. Abdul Fatah.

"That man was brilliant — all the wind coming into Mosul comes from the northwest. All those years ago he actually measured that fact and designed his building accordingly."

"It is the main reason why this minaret has survived so long when other minarets in the city have collapsed."

His colleague Imad Maalullah Khalil is amazed by the design of the stairs giving access to the minaret's roof.

"There are two separate staircases — they go up in the same direction and yet they do not meet at any point and, as you go up one staircase, you cannot hear any noise from the other."

But both are rather less complimentary about the handiwork of the Italian firm which carried out restoration work at the minaret between 1979 and 1981.

"They were paid a great deal of money and yet they did virtually nothing beneath the ground," Mr. Abdul Fatah said. "Everything was cosmetic and above the ground, and as a result it's lasted less than 20 years."

He said that all the Italian firm had done beneath the ground was to inject 40 tonnes of concrete grouting.

But from the evidence of the survey boreholes their team had dug, he said such an injection of concrete was no solution at all.

The first 25-metre borehole identified a cave more than seven metres deep just seven metres below the surface, the second a two-metre cavity six metres down, and the third a 2.8-metre cavity four and a half metres down.

"You would have to pump a million tonnes of concrete into the cavities to have any hope of filling them and that's just not practical," he said.

"The best solution would be to insert two concentric rings of piles around the base of the minaret to contain the grouting."

"But of course that costs money, more money perhaps than Iraq can spare given all the problems we face as a result of U.N. sanctions."

Abdul Fatah's own survey work, hampered as it is by the long power cuts and shortages of spare parts resulting from the sanctions imposed for Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, costs just 1.75 million Iraqi dinars (less than \$200,000).

But he remains philosophical about the chances of actually saving the minaret. "In the end everything is in the hands of our God, Allah," he said.

JORDAN TELEVISION

TEL. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

16:10 Mr. Bogus Show

16:30 French Programmes

18:00 Oliver Twist

18:30 Drama — Neighbours

19:00 Le Journal

19:15 Science Magazine — E-M6

19:30 News headlines

19:35 Comedy — Campus Cops

20:00 Doc. — The Health Show

20:30 Doc. — The Last Neanderthal

21:10 Drama — Kung Fu

22:00 News in English

22:30 Mini-series: "Maria Chapdelaine"

23:59 Country Music

00:30 End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:42 Fajr

06:03 Sunrise/Duha

12:36 Dhuhur

16:12 Asr

19:08 Maghreb

20:29 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 5920740

Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4632785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4622366

Anglican Church Tel. 4624853/4624811.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

<p>St. Alfra Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751.</p> <p>Amman International Church Tel. 865897</p> <p>German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404</p> <p>The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295</p> <p>Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932</p> <p>St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757</p> <p>Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440</p> <p>Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138</p> <p>Church of Presentation, Sweifeh Tel. 5920146</p> <p>The Uniate Catholic Church Tel. 4624757</p> <p>The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190</p> <p>Evangelical Free Church Tel. 892679</p> <p>The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052</p> <p>The Armenian Catholic Church 771331</p>	<p>and dusty. Winds will be southerly moderate and rough sea.</p> <p>Amman 20/35</p> <p>Aqaba 26/41</p> <p>Deserts 19/37</p> <p>Jordan Valley 22/39</p> <p>Yesterday's high temperatures:</p> <p>Amman 34, Aqaba 40 Humidity readings: Amman 24 per cent, Aqaba 19 per cent.</p>	<p>EMERGENCIES</p> <p>Food Control Centre4637111</p> <p>Civil Defence Department 5661111</p> <p>Civil Defence Immediate Rescue4630341</p> <p>Civil Defence Emergency.....199</p> <p>Rescue Police 192.4621111.4637777</p> <p>Fire Brigade4617101</p> <p>Blood Bank775121</p> <p>Highway Police843402</p> <p>Traffic Police896390</p> <p>Public Security Dept.4630321</p> <p>Hotel Complaints.....5658000</p> <p>Price Complaints.....5661176</p> <p>Water & Sewerage Complaints 897467</p> <p>Amman Municipality Complaints787111</p> <p>Telephone Information (directory assistance)121</p> <p>Overseas Calls010230</p> <p>Central Amman Telephone Repairs4623101</p> <p>Abdali Tel. Repairs.....5661101</p> <p>Radio Television773111</p> <p>Jordan Jordan774111</p> <p>Water Authority5680100</p> <p>J. Electricity Authority.....815615</p> <p>Electric Power Co.....4636381</p> <p>RF Right Information..44-53200</p> <p>Queen Alia Intl. Airport44-53200</p>	<p>The Islamic,Abdli56661317</p> <p>Hussien Medical Centre Tel. 836813.866856</p> <p>Luzmila4630195</p> <p>Khalidi Maternity.....46424216</p> <p>Akileh Maternity46424412</p> <p>Labai Amman Maternity 4642362</p> <p>Malthas, J. Amman4636140</p> <p>Palestine, Shmeisani5607071</p> <p>Shmeisani Hospital5669131</p> <p>University Hospital458454</p> <p>Al-Muasher Hospital 5667227/9</p> <p>Al-Ahli, Abdali566416106</p> <p>Italian, Al-Muhajreen 7771413</p> <p>Al-Bashir.....77511126</p> <p>Army, Marka891611/15</p> <p>Queen Alia Hospital 5662240/5</p> <p>Amal Hospital5674155</p> <p>ZARQA:</p> <p>Zarqa Govt. Hospital09/983323</p> <p>Zarqa National Hospital09/900560</p> <p>Ibn Sina Hospital09/986732</p> <p>Al Hikma Modern Hospital09/99099</p> <p>IRBID:</p> <p>Princess Basma Hospital02/275555</p> <p>Greek Catholic Hospital02/272275</p> <p>Ibn Al Nafees Hospital02/247100</p> <p>AQABA:</p> <p>Princess Haya Hospital (0313)4111</p>	<p>FOR THE TRAVELLER</p> <p>QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT</p> <p>This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53200 where it should always be verified.</p> <p>Information on other flights are supplied on phone 44 (52700) or 44,53250).</p> <p>ARRIVALS</p> <p>Royal Jordanian (RJ)</p> <p>Flights</p> <p>07:30Damascus (RJ)</p> <p>07:30Jeddah (add) (RJ)</p> <p>09:00Jeddah (RJ)</p> <p>09:50 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)</p> <p>10:95Jeddah (add) (RJ)</p> <p>12:00Larnaca (RJ)</p> <p>14:00Paris (add) (RJ)</p> <p>15:30Jeddah (add) (RJ)</p> <p>15:35 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)</p> <p>17:25London (RJ)</p> <p>17:40Frankfurt (RJ)</p> <p>18:00Paris (RJ)</p> <p>18:45Brussels, Vienna (RJ)</p> <p>18:50Istanbul (RJ)</p> <p>19:15Tel Aviv (add) (RJ)</p> <p>19:20Madrid, Geneva (RJ)</p> <p>19:55Rome (RJ)</p> <p>00:15Beirut (RJ)</p> <p>02:50Cairo (RJ)</p>	<p>Other Flights</p> <p>10:30Cairo (M)</p> <p>11:00Sanaa, Hudaidah (Y)</p> <p>11:30Kuwait (K)</p> <p>12:30Jeddah (SV)</p> <p>14:10Tunis (TU)</p> <p>14:10Bahrain (G)</p> <p>15:05Vienna (O)</p> <p>16:30Algiers (AF)</p> <p>18:35 Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PH)</p> <p>19:05Frankfurt (LH)</p> <p>21:10Beirut (MH)</p> <p>23:20Istanbul (TK)</p> <p>23:20Amsterdam (KL)</p> <p>23:45Athens, Beirut (OA)</p> <p>00:15London (BA)</p> <p>Royal Wings (RW)</p> <p>08:45Aqaba (RW)</p> <p>10:05Amman (QAIA) (RW)</p> <p>10:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)</p> <p>18:20Tel Aviv (RW)</p> <p>19:30Amman (QAIA) (RW)</p> <p>22:20Aqaba (RW)</p> <p>23:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)</p> <p>DEPARTURES</p> <p>05:15Jeddah (add) (RJ)</p> <p>08:50Amsterdam, New York (RJ)</p> <p>09:00Larnaca (RJ)</p> <p>10:00Jeddah (add) (RJ)</p> <p>11:00Rome (RJ)</p> <p>11:45Berlin, London (RJ)</p> <p>13:30Istanbul (RJ)</p> <p>17:20Tel Aviv (RJ)</p>
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Crown Prince, Princess Sarvath return to Amman

AMMAN (J.T.) — Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath returned to Amman Tuesday after visits to Germany, the United Kingdom and the U.S., followed by a private visit to Europe.

They were met at the airport by His Majesty King Hussein and members of the Royal family, as well as senior government officials.

The Prince and Princess were accompanied by their Royal Highnesses Princess Rahmah and Princess Badia.

While in London, Prince Hassan opened the Jordanian Badia Week, and in Bonn he met German Chancellor Helmut Kohl to discuss Middle East developments and Jordanian-German economic relations.

In New York, Prince Hassan met ambassadors to the U.N. from Arab and Islamic countries and discussed efforts to overcome obstacles facing the peace process. The Crown Prince called for coordination in efforts by Arab and Islamic countries to serve national causes.



Royal Jordanian CEO and President Nader Dahabi and Omani Airways Director General Clive Raymond sign one of four cooperation agreements (Petra photo)

Royal Jordanian, Omani Airways sign cooperation agreements

AMMAN (Petra) — Royal Jordanian (RJ), the country's air carrier, and Omani Airways have concluded four agreements on technical cooperation, air operations, in-flight services and personnel training on aircraft maintenance.

The four agreements were signed by RJ CEO and President Nader Dahabi and Omani Airways Director General Clive Raymond.

At a press conference after the signing ceremony, Mr. Dahabi said the agreements

are designed to bolster bilateral cooperation and enable Omani Airways to benefit from RJ's experience in training and aircraft maintenance.

An Omani delegation visited Jordan in order to examine RJ's facilities, including the technical and maintenance workshop and the flight simulator to train pilots, and is touring the various departments to be briefed on their work, according to Mr. Dahabi.

RJ has also prepared a programme for the Omani delegation to visit the Kingdom's

tourist and archaeological sites and meet senior officials in the Civil Aviation Authority and the transport sector, he stated.

The two national airlines will exchange expertise and information as well as cooperate in promoting flight services, he said.

For his part, Mr. Raymond expressed Omani Airways' appreciation for Jordan's cooperation and for opening the door to an exchange of expertise to help promote the airline's performance.

Jordan to help Iraqi girl receive leukaemia treatment in U.K.

AMMAN (Agencies) — Britain has approached the office of HRH Crown Prince Hassan to provide logistic support to enable a four-year-old Iraqi girl to be flown to the U.K. for hospital treatment, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

According to the report, Maria Hamza will be flown aboard a Royal Wings aircraft Wednesday from Baghdad to Amman, where she will continue the trip to London.

Meanwhile, the British government Tuesday welcomed the granting of an exemption to U.N. sanctions to allow the girl to get urgent hospital treatment in Britain. "I am delighted we have been able to secure approval from the U.N. Sanctions Committee for the flight, which will bring Maria Hamza out of Iraq to the U.K. for urgently needed medical treatment," Minister of State at the Foreign Office

Derek Fatchett said in a statement.

Leukaemia sufferer Maria is expected to arrive with her grandmother later this week at a children's hospital in Glasgow, Scotland, the statement said.

She could leave Iraq on Wednesday and arrive in Britain on Thursday or Friday.

The U.N. made the exception after pressure from British MP George Galloway, a member of the ruling Labour party, who has

campaigned for several weeks on Maria's behalf and visited Iraq last week.

Mr. Galloway has consistently championed the lifting of U.N. air, oil and trade sanctions imposed on Iraq after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait, and denounced the effects of the embargo on Iraqi children.

A large number of leukaemia cases have been registered in Iraq since the Gulf war in 1990-1991.

Vice squad seizes over 27 kg of drugs

AMMAN (Petra) — The Anti-Narcotics Department (AND) Tuesday announced the seizure of a variety of drugs and the arrest of a number of people attempting to sell them between February 25 and April 14.

AND Director Nazih Shreideh said department personnel seized 4.5 kilograms of heroin, 22 kilograms of hashish, half a kilogramme of marijuana, and 500 marijuana plants during that period.

The drugs were seized in 48 operations, in which 76 people from Jordan and other Arab and foreign countries were involved, Col. Shreideh said.

Over the same period, the department dealt with 24 other cases in which 49 suspects were involved in using drugs. Department agents also solved 14 cases of forgery in which 27 suspects were arrested and referred to the judicial authorities, he added.

The AND dealt with three cases involving eight suspects who were attempting to smuggle artefacts including statues, ancient coins and pottery, he said.

The department dealt with 12 cases involving counterfeit currency, seizing forged money worth \$14,000, JD5,370, 5,500 Saudi riyals and 3,500 United Arab Emirates dirhams, he stated.

Col. Shreideh said AND personnel were intensifying their efforts to prevent drug traffickers from using Jordanian territory as a transit point to smuggle drugs and at the same time to deal with drug pushers operating in Jordan.

Mu'ta University opens conference examining environmental problems

KARAK (Petra) — Mu'ta University on Tuesday opened its first conference on environmental problems with the participation of scientists and researchers from Jordan and 11 other Arab countries.

During the three-day conference, 50 delegates will focus on 11 major topics covering organic and chemical fertilisers, agricultural input types, bio-diversity, rehabilitating natural pastures, desertification, recycling agricultural and industrial waste products, exemplary methods for the exploitation of water resources, water salinity and its problems, and environmental pollution.

Deputising for HRH Prince Firas at the opening of the conference, Mu'ta University President 'Eid Dahiyat stated that the

world has been giving much attention to the question of the environment over the past three decades after humans began paying a high price as a result of environmental pollution and the abuse of natural resources.

Among the challenges facing Jordan and the Arab World are desertification, the population explosion and a decrease in the size of arable lands, said Dr. Dahiyat, noting that deserts constitute 90 per cent of the Arab World.

Stressing that natural resources are also the right of future generations, Dr. Dahiyat said everything possible should be done to ensure a balance in nature by protecting the environment from pollution.

Khaled Tarawneh, dean of the university's agricul-

ture faculty, which organised the meeting, told the opening session that the economic development needed in the 21st century requires an increase in production and at the same time drastic solutions for environmental problems.

He expressed appreciation for the Arab Organisation for Agricultural Development, the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company and the Arab Potash Company as well as the Abdul Hamid Shoman Foundation, the Cairo Amman Bank, the Housing Bank and the Islamic Bank for their contributions to the conference.

The countries represented at the meetings are Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Algeria, Tunisia and Yemen.

Seminar preparing international donor proposals to help country's disabled

By Suha Ma'ayeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A joint Jordanian-European seminar is preparing proposals that will be submitted to international donors to help Jordan's disabled, officially estimated at over 48,850 of the country's 4.2 million population.

The three-day seminar, organised by the Jordanian-European Information, Training and Technical Assistance for non-governmental organisations (JETTT) project in cooperation with the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF), is expected to end later today.

NGOs and charities work-

ing with the disabled are attending training workshops at the Queen Zein Al Sharaf Development Complex.

Hassan Ustah, director of the JETT Project, said the present workshops were a follow up to similar ones held in January.

"We found out that there is a need to conduct workshops in order to develop specialised training for participants on how to chart project proposals, which they can submit to international donors," Mr. Ustah told the Jordan Times.

Each of the participating NGOs will have to prepare a proposal for donors, he added.

Michael Porsken, president of Eurocom, a German charity founded in Berlin in 1989, said detecting disability at an early stage would lead to much better results.

"Early detection of disability, especially at a very young age, and integrating disabled children with non-disabled results in better communication, and the disabled will learn how to fight for their rights," he said.

He said Jordan had modern laws dealing with the rights of the disabled and integrating them in society.

However, Dr. Porsken stressed that raising awareness among parents of the disabled on how to deal with them was essential, instead of shunning them.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Last group of Arab Israeli Hajj pilgrims leave Jordan

AMMAN (Petra) — The last group of Arab Israeli pilgrims that performed this year's Hajj to Mecca on Tuesday crossed the King Hussein Bridge on the Jordan River. A total of 3,500 Arab Israeli pilgrims performed the Hajj this year.

Temperatures to cool

AMMAN (Petra) — The heat wave that has affected the country over the last week is expected to diminish as of Thursday afternoon, according to Meteorology Department sources. Temperatures over the next couple of days will be 9-12

degrees higher than average for this time of the year, the sources said.

65-year-old man killed by son

AMMAN (J.T.) — Police in the Koura district Monday disclosed details of the murder of a 65-year-old man in the town of Zinal. Police sources said the man was shot by his son for family reasons. The suspect allegedly shot his father while he was working at his farm and then hid the pistol he used near the farm. Meanwhile, in Kiteh in the Jerash Governorate, a 70-year-old man, identified as Murshed Rawashdeh, was found hanged to death.



Gorbachev to deliver lecture next week

AMMAN — Former Soviet Union President Mikhail Gorbachev is to deliver a lecture entitled "Leadership and Global Challenges" at the Institute of Diplomacy in Amman on Monday, April 20, 1998.

The lecture, organised jointly by the Institute of Diplomacy and the United Nations International Leadership Academy (ILA), will be delivered in Russian with simultaneous translation for the benefit of the local audience.

The event will be held under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor, president of the ILA consultative council.

what's going on

FILMS

* Spanish children's film "Palace" at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman on Thursday, April 16, at 5:00 p.m.

* "Fern Gully: The Last Rainforest" at the American Center, Abdoun on Thursday, April 16, at 5:00 p.m.

BALLET AND CONCERT

* Ballet performance by the students of the Ahliah School for Girls at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

* The cycle "The Miracle of Life" from the poems of Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, composed by Agnes Bashir, will be sung by Tania Tamara Nasser at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh on Friday, April 17 (7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.).

LECTURES

* "The Arabic Epigraphic Poems of Granada and Generalife" (in Arabic) by Dr. Salah Jarrar at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.

* "International Right to Exploitation of Water" (in English) by Dr. Christian Ule at the Applied Science University at 10:00 a.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Photographic exhibition entitled "A Tour in the Dead Sea" by Jaussen and Savignac at the French Cultural Centre, until April 30.

* Paintings by Lebanese-American artist Eiel Adnan entitled "Artist's Book of Art and Poetry" at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until May 21.

* Works by Maurice Hadad at Hammurabi Arts Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5536098), until April 22.

* Exhibition of works by Jordanian artists Ramin Rshaid, Abdullah Thabshat and Qasem Al Dwairi at the Royal Cultural Centre, until April 16.

* Paintings on handmade paper at Noor Al Hussein Foundation, off Wadi Sagra St. (Tel. 5699141/2), until April 25.

Sharif refused to conduct attack on Israel — PNA

(Continued from page 1)

preparations had not been made for a bombing, the official said. Hamas has vehemently rejected police claims that Sharif was killed in an internal dispute within the movement and has accused Israel of slaying him with help from Palestinian security officials.

Sharif's death has led to sharp tensions between Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and Hamas and police have arrested dozens of Hamas members since Sharif's murder. In a closed session, Mr. Abdul

Rahim presented a report of Sharif's death to the 88-member council, which decided to form a commission to review the police investigations, members said.

Mr. Abdul Rahim told the council that Sharif's killers "are now in police custody and investigations are ongoing to find out who issued orders for his assassination," a member said.

"Disputes over whether to conduct attacks or not played a role in Sharif's murder," council members quoted Mr. Abdul Rahim as saying in the session.

Palestinian officials, who have tried to convince local Hamas leaders to halt their attacks, have in the past blamed bombings on the movement's leaders in exile in neighbouring Arab countries.

Sharif's body was found in Ramallah at the site of an explosion which police say was set off by Mr. Awadallah's followers in a bid to disguise his murder.

It took three days for Palestinian police to identify the body as Sharif, who has topped Israel's most wanted list for his role in planning bomb attacks which have killed scores of Israelis.

PhRMA requests Jordan be placed on 'priority watch' list

(Continued from page 1)

worsened despite intense diplomatic pressure from major trading partners.

The United States Trade Representative (USTR) has last year placed Jordan on a special 301 "Watch" list of countries violating Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) rules.

It cited inadequate IPR protection for pharmaceutical and other intellectual property-sensitive industries such as computer soft-

ware and video games.

However, director of the Technical Support Unit at the Planning Ministry, Yusuf Mansur, dismissed the importance of PhRMA's request to place Jordan on the "Priority Watch" list for as long as Jordan is working to upgrade its IPR laws.

"We are not concerned at all because we are doing all we can to bring our intellectual property rights into best international practice," he said.

In fact, Jordan received excellent reports from the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) regarding our revised IPR legislation," Dr. Mansur added.

Jordanian pharmaceutical manufacturers and officials believe that achieving adequate and effective protection of patents will encourage creativity and enhance the country's development. "One must keep in mind that Jordan is a developing country and for it to move

towards complete IPR application and implementation, it needs training and a fair grace period for adjustment," Dr. Mansur earlier told the Jordan Times.

Under the association agreement reached between Jordan and the European Union in November to create a gradual free trade zone by the year 2010, Jordan was given a grace period of three years to implement internationally acceptable

IPR laws for its pharmaceutical industry.

Jordan's 16 drug manufacturers, whose exports topped \$140 million last year, want the Kingdom — about to accede to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) — not to show flexibility when negotiating a grace period with the 142-member organisation.

Jordan, which is currently engaged in negotiations with the WTO hopes to join the organisation in the near future.

Talks between N. and S. Korea collapse

BEIJING (R) — Talks between rivals North and South Korea broke down Tuesday over Seoul's demand for concessions on reuniting separated Korean families as the price for fertilizer aid to its famine-stricken neighbour.

Chief negotiators from the two sides traded barbed comments after a final session failed to break a stalemate, each blaming the other for the impasse.

Pyeonggiang had called for the first high-level contact in four years to discuss a request for fertilizer to help with the spring crop planting.

But at the outset of the talks Saturday, South Korea linked aid to progress on political issues, particularly the question of reuniting families separated since the 1950-53 Korean war.

"Because the South attached political conditions to an economic and humanitarian issue, talks did not succeed," North Korea's chief negotiator Jon Kum-Chol told reporters.

"I came here thinking it would be easy to agree on the simple matter of fertilizer," he said.

The head of the South Korean delegation Jeong Se-Hyun, the vice-minister for national unification, said Seoul was adamant it would not give fertilizer unless Pyongyang backed down on

family visits.

"North Korea said the family issue is a political issue while the fertilizer issue was a humanitarian issue. But we believe the reunion of families is a humanitarian issue of the first order," he told a separate news conference.

"Without any sign of goodwill from the North Korean side we cannot provide unilateral aid because the South Korean public will not support unilateral concessions."

However, Mr. Jeong held out a glimmer of hope by saying negotiating teams would stay in Beijing for another two days.

"We agreed to reexamine our respective positions and if there is any change we will contact each other," he said. "But there is no guarantee that they will resume."

"I have doubts that North Korea understands what is meant by reciprocity," he said.

North Korea's Mr. Jon revealed that he had asked for 500,000 tonnes of fertilizer. Previous reports had said the North was seeking 200,000 tonnes.

Mr. Jon said the fertilizer would have to arrive within a few months to be of any use.

He insisted Pyongyang had shown good faith by agreeing to expand the talks

from fertilizer to political issues.

"The attachment of pre-conditions was a departure from our original position," he said. "We made a concession by agreeing to talk about other issues of mutual interest."

North Korea is suffering from three years of floods and drought and millions are on the edge of starvation.

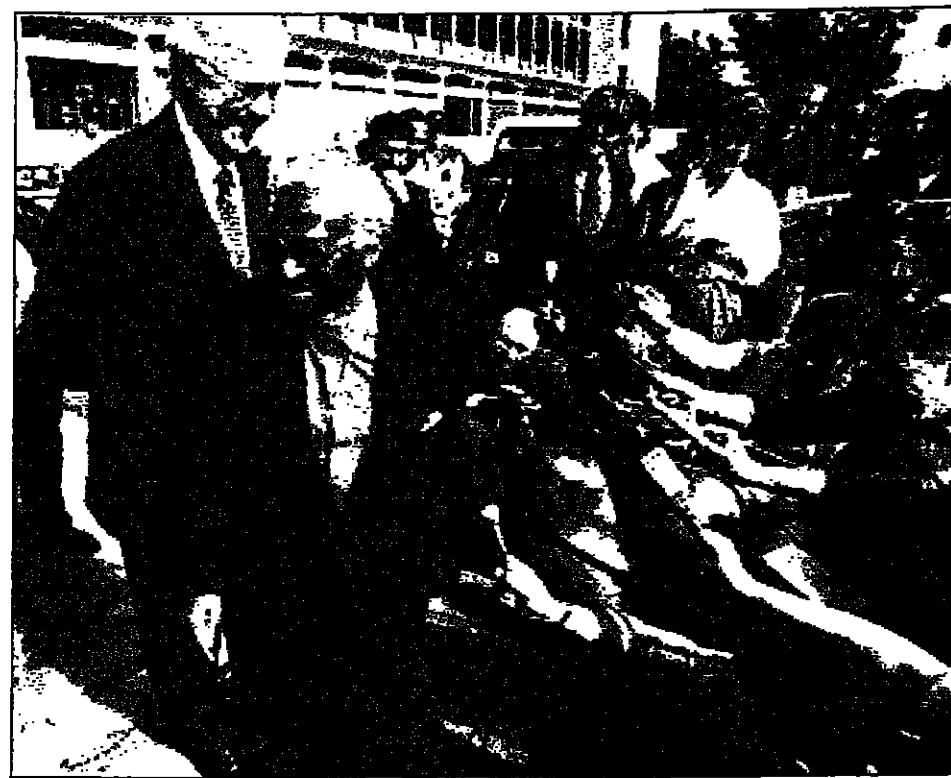
But large-scale aid to the often hostile north is a tough sell among South Koreans hit hard by the Asian financial crisis that has sparked bankruptcies and rising unemployment.

Seoul had also proposed discussing an exchange of permanent envoys and reopening liaison offices in the border town of Panmunjom that the North abandoned in 1996.

Also on the agenda was implementation of a 1991 basic agreement to pursue peaceful reunification.

It was the first high-level contact between the bitter enemies since vice-premiers of the two sides met in 1994 to discuss the first-ever inter-Korean presidential summit.

But the death of North Korea's "great leader" Kim Il-Sung that year intervened, and relations later turned icy.



Archbishop Desmond Tutu speaks to the press outside the George court house. Lawyers of the former South African President P.W. Botha and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) are trying to negotiate a deal with the TRC so that Mr. Botha does not have to testify in court and avoid embarrassment of having criminal record (Reuters photo)

Chief prosecutor sets deadline for Botha trial deal

GEORGE, South Africa (AFP) — The chief prosecutor in the truth commission's case against former South African President P.W. Botha has set a deadline of 8:00 a.m. (0600 GMT) Wednesday for opposing lawyers to strike a deal which would halt the case.

State prosecutor Bruce Morrison told the court after hours of intensive discussions during an adjournment Tuesday that the parties were "very close to reaching an agreement" but had not yet struck a deal.

He said Attorney General Frank Kahn "has made it clear that unless the parties reach agreement by 8:00 a.m., the matter will proceed."

The imposition of a deadline came after hours of

talks between lawyers for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the 82-year-old apartheid-era hardliner.

Mr. Botha went on trial earlier Tuesday charged with refusing to testify before the commission, which is probing human rights abuses committed during the apartheid era.

However, when the case was adjourned for further discussion after only 10 minutes, it appeared likely that a compromise would be reached which would see Mr. Botha giving testimony before a specially-arranged TRC hearing.

In return the case would be dropped.

TRC chairman Archbishop Desmond Tutu told reporters outside the court: "We believed we

were very close to an agreement. The negotiations are on a knife-edge."

"We do not know which way it will turn. We hope very much that agreement will be reached. The TRC has wanted an agreement," the retired Anglican archbishop said.

"It is imperative that people realise that the commission was set up to do very important work for the healing of the nation. We hope Mr. Botha and his legal team will see their way clear to participate in the process of reconciliation."

The TRC wants to question Mr. Botha on his leadership of the now-defunct State Security Council which supervised state repression of the black struggle against apartheid.

7m Indians bathe in Ganges as pilgrimage draws to close

HARDWAR, India (AFP) — Almost seven million Hindu devotees crowded into the northern Indian city of Hardwar Tuesday for the climax of a festival touted as the world's largest pilgrimage gathering.

Wave after wave of worshippers made their way to the banks of the Ganges as the Mahakumbh festival, which began in January and is held here every 12 years, wound down.

Police, meanwhile, were declaring the event a major logistical success following earlier fears of possible stampedes or violence between religious sects.

Chief of police V.K. Gupta said: "Some 6.5 million people have already come and by the end of the day the figure is bound to go up higher."

"There is a continuous stream of humanity and there is a three kilometre road which is choked with people."

Huge crowds of devotees, chanting prayers, hurled garlands and gems into the river, considered sacred by Hindus, before symbolically washing away their sins.

The closing act came as a congregation of 40,000 holy men, most naked and sporting long matted hair and beards, bathed in the river to mark the end of the festival.

Hardwar, in the foothills of the Himalayas, normally has a population of around 300,000 people. More than 10 million people have converged on the city since Monday. Massive tent encampments were set up to cope with the influx.

Police said at the start of the week that they were determined to avoid a repeat of previous festival tragedies.

Around 30 people were crushed to death in 1986, while hundreds were killed in a stampede when the festival was held in 1954 in the northern town of Allahabad. The authorities have often been accused of

making little effort to safeguard the pilgrims.

Such fears were brought into focus after at least 118 Muslim pilgrims died in a stampede during a pilgrimage to Mecca last week.

But the police's only real problem in the final days of the Mahakumbh came when a row escalated between rival sects of holy men or "sadhus", many of them known for their aggressive behaviour, over bathing areas and timings.

Chief organiser J.P. Sharma, who responded by banning the sects' religious processions down to the Ganges, relented after the groups, most of them from remote Himalayan regions, and committed to poverty and the search for enlightenment, pledged to avoid violence.

"The Hindu holy men wanted the procession to be taken out in traditional glory and style and we have agreed," Mr. Sharma said.

The authorities, however, took no chances, with around 6,000 police accompanying each of the religious processions down to the river. In all, around 25,000 police and paramilitaries were on duty.

Tuesday's bathing took place in 27 areas spread over a radius of 12.5 kilometres from the main bathing platform in Har Ke Pouri (Stairs of the Gods).

Massive queues of people Tuesday edged through the crowded in soaring temperatures on their way to the edge of the Ganges. Hindus believe the holy river will help them wash away their sins.

This year's celebrations in the city, some 175 kilometres north of New Delhi in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, have been termed the most sacred since they are the last this century.

Last month in Hardwar 150 holy men were hurt, with some reports indicating 10 deaths, after clashes between sects.



Malnourished babies are seen at Pyongsan County Hospital, North Korea. The head of the U.N. World Food Programme Catherine Bertini again lashed out at North Korea for not letting international aid workers freely monitor distribution of food to its famine hit population (Reuters photo)

After gang's retribution, 15 dead in Bogota prison

BOGOTA (R) — At least 15 people died in Bogota's Picota prison Monday when a gang leader was killed and prisoners seeking revenge slaughtered 14 inmates in another cellblock, authorities said.

It was the worst bloodshed in Colombia's notoriously overcrowded prisons in more than a decade.

Francisco Bernal, director of the National Prison Institute, said the carnage began at about 11 a.m. (1600 GMT) when inmates from the prison's No. 4 cellblock murdered Oscar Rodriguez, the ringleader of a gang that controls two other cellblocks.

About two hours later, Rodriguez's Henchmen, armed with guns and knives they had smuggled into the prison, reacted by storming cellblock No. 4 and killing 13 inmates, Mr. Bernal said. "They took it by assault," Mr. Bernal said, explaining that Rodriguez's followers overwhelmed prison guards to enter the area that housed their leader's killers.

"The murder by inmates from cellblock No. 4... provoked this very serious act that resulted in the killing of 13 other inmates," Mr. Bernal said in an interview on Radionet news radio.

He said three inmates were seriously injured in the attack, and prison officials said later one of them had

died in a hospital.

Calling the death toll "a tragedy," Mr. Bernal said it marked the worst single incident in any Colombian prison in years.

Colombia's prison system houses more than 43,000 inmates in facilities built for about 30,000, and overcrowding and squalid conditions have been cited repeatedly as among the root causes of violent uprisings and clashes between inmates.

The worst previous incident in a Colombian prison this year occurred on Feb. 4, when six inmates died in a clash between rival gangs armed with knives, guns and homemade grenades in the modelo penitentiary in Cucuta, on Colombia's border with Venezuela.

Mr. Bernal said the Picota prison currently housed 1,356 inmates but did not specify the population the ageing facility on the southern outskirts of Bogota was built to hold.

Luis Carlos Mendez, a spokesman for the prison's security guards, said the authorities were at least partly responsible for Monday's violence, since the Picota had just 90 guards, or 45 for each of two daily shifts.

Only one guard was on duty in cellblock No. 4 when it was raided by the killers Monday, he told reporters. President Ernesto Samper

called an urgent meeting of his national security advisers late Monday, but few concrete decisions were taken. After the meeting, Justice Minister Almaguer Rengifo reiterated pledges to beef up weapons checks and other security controls on visitors to the prison.

She rejected suggestions that the violence was a product of chronic overcrowding.

"This was not sparked by overcrowding. This unfortunate incident is a product of the violence that we are all suffering in Colombia," Ms. Rengifo told reporters.

Local media speculated before the crisis meeting that Mr. Samper was preparing to "militarise" the country's penitentiaries by shifting control over them to the national police from the National Prison Institute.

The Picota's most notorious inmates, who live in the relative luxury of its maximum-security wing, are brothers Miguel and Gilberto Rodriguez Orejuela, leaders of the Cali drug cartel, which once controlled about 80 per cent of the world's cocaine supply.

Mr. Bernal said the inmates in the Picota's blood-soaked cellblock No. 4 came from all walks of criminal life but most were hardened prisoners guilty of kidnapping and murder.

Oldest Bulgarian marks 119th birthday

SOFIA (AFP) — Bulgaria's oldest known citizen, Feime Hassanova, celebrated her 119th birthday Tuesday, the Standard reported here.

In an interview with the daily, Ms. Hassanova played down her longevity, saying: "I am old, but there must be people older than I am."

Married to an older man at age 12 according to her father's wishes, Ms. Hassanova's husband Mehmed died in 1972 at age 108.

She cannot read, write or count and said she has never seen a radio or television, but is a devout Muslim and "prays to Allah five times a day," the report said.

Mrs. Hassanova had five children, two of whom are still living, 16 grandchildren, 17 great-grandchildren and four great-great-grandchildren — one of whom translated for the old lady who speaks only a dialect, the paper said.

During her long life, she farmed and raised sheep and mules, but complains now that a weakness in her legs prevents her from working.

Potatoes, milk, yoghurt, beans and mutton are her main foods. "I don't eat any pork or beef. But I like good things," she told the Standard.

Quake rattles Tangshan city, near Beijing

BEIJING (AFP) — A minor earthquake Tuesday struck just outside the northeastern city of Tangshan, where more than 200,000 were killed in 1976 by the most deadly temblor in Chinese history, the State Seismology Bureau said.

Tuesday's quake, which measured 4.7 on the Richter scale, occurred at 10:47 a.m. (0247 GMT), it said.

A district government official told AFP there were no immediate reports of casualties. Workers moved out of doors when the quake began, but there was no panic and the situation quickly returned to normal, she said.

Minor damage was reported in the city's Dongkuang district, where chimneys, old walls, and the watchtower of the Pijidian jail collapsed. But no homes were destroyed, according to Wang Yunqi, a director of the Hebei Provincial Seismological Bureau, quoted by Xinhua.

The epicentre of the quake was located in Guye district, 175 kilometres east of here at 39.40 degrees north lati-

tude and 118.28 degrees east.

An official with the State Seismological Bureau said the quake would have no major impact on nearby cities of Tangshan, Beijing, and Tianjin.

"There is little possibility of a stronger quake in the area in the near future," he added, according to Xinhua news agency, which added that there were no injuries.

The bureau said the quake was along the same fault-line as the 1976 temblor that flattened Tangshan, killing 242,000 people according to official figures.

The state media has boasted the city had been completely rebuilt using construction techniques designed to resist quakes of up to eight on the Richter scale.

A Jan. 10 quake struck rural villages northwest of here in Hebei province, killing 47 and leaving more than 44,000 homeless.

Seismological officials at the time downplayed the possibility of a disastrous quake hitting Beijing.

Australia to crack down on Asian sex slaves

CANBERRA (AFP) — An escalation in the number of Asian women working in Australian brothels prompted the government Tuesday to initiate a crackdown on organisers of the burgeoning sex slave trade.

"We need legislation that targets the traffickers that recruit, organise and profit from those engaged in prostitution in slave-like conditions," Justice Minister Amanda Vanstone said in a background paper on the problem.

She said there had been a noticeable increase in the number of mostly Asian women working in virtual slavery, in legal and illegal brothels, often lured to Australia on the pretence of gaining legitimate jobs.

Existing laws had proven ineffective in curbing the trade, she said.

Immigration department figures showed 54 people were deported for working illegally in brothels in 1996-97.

In the seven months to January, 67 were deported for the same offence.

The issue is to be discussed Friday at a meeting of attorneys-general in Perth.

Ms. Vanstone said the movement of women was arranged by international crime syndicates, some with links to the drug trade.

It was highly organised and used sophisticated international networks of procurers, document forgers and providers, escorts, organisers, financiers, corrupt officials and brothel operators.

"The high profit potential, combined with the difficulty of detection and comparatively low penalties from prosecution, has resulted in an increase in the number of groups engaged in these activities," she said.

Although some women enter Australia to work in the sex industry, others come on the promise of jobs in restaurants, nightclubs or as nannies.

Organisers can exploit their vulnerability by demanding repayment of debts as high as \$50,000 Australian dollars (\$33,500), supposedly incurred in organising their travel, the debt being used to coerce the women into prostitution.

There have been claims that women have had to service 500 men to clear their debt.

Others have complained of long shifts, limited food and medical care, no freedom of movement and of having to engage in unprotected sex.

Ms. Vanstone said investigators had pointed to a cash flow of up to \$1 million a week, most going to organisers overseas.

As well, the trade involved breaches of immigration law.

Significant numbers of foreign sex workers were also claiming refugee status to gain work visas while their status was considered a process that can take several years.

Thousands of Indonesian students call on Suharto to step down

Indonesian students held a mass rally in front of the Indonesian parliament building in Jakarta, demanding the resignation of President Suharto.

The rally was part of a series of protests against Suharto's long rule, which has been marked by corruption and repression.

The students, many of whom are from the University of Indonesia, are demanding Suharto's resignation and the establishment of a new democratic government.

The rally was held in front of the Indonesian parliament building, which is a symbol of the country's political power.

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World

World News

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Thousands of Indonesian students call on Suharto to step down

PADANG, Indonesia (AFP) — Thousands of Indonesian students Tuesday held a mass rally here to demand the resignation of President Suharto over the country's crippling economic crisis.

Some 5,000 banner-waving students rallied at Andalas University in West Sumatra province to demand an emergency session of parliament to impeach Mr. Suharto, 76, now serving his seventh five-year term in office.

"Suharto must step down," was the slogan on one of the posters.

"The economic crisis has reached a critical level and the ones responsible for the situation are in Suharto's government," said Rahmatullah from the campus in Padang, the capital of West Sumatra.

Students from eight state and private universities in the province joined the rally which was closely watched by security forces.

The students later dispersed peacefully.

"There is a particular need for cultural reformation, especially given that Indonesia is regarded as the most corrupt nation in the world after Brazil and Mexico," said rally coordinator Agusmanandani.

Students around the country have kept up their pressure on the government since the end of February, with the most violent incident taking place when 15 students and five policemen were injured in a clash two weeks ago at a university in the central Java town of Yogyakarta.

The minister of education has since banned all "practical politics" on campus or any attempts to influence the political decision-making process.

The demonstrating students have rejected the ban and called on the government and the military to respect their right to free speech.



Democratic Party Chairman Martin Lee (second left) and Vice-Chairman Yeung Sum (second right) flash victory signs with party members Chan Kwok-Leung (left) and Yuen Bun-Keung as they register as candidates to run in Hong Kong's Legislative Council election (Reuters photo)

Hong Kong democrat Lee steps into election fray

HONG KONG (R) — Hong Kong's champion of democracy, Martin Lee, Tuesday registered for the territory's first legislative election under Chinese rule, but branded the polls unfair, confusing and anti-democratic.

"Up to now the government has not succeeded in promoting the election," Mr. Lee told reporters as he filed his candidacy for the Hong Kong island constituency.

"The new electoral arrangements are very confusing," he said of the legislative council election that culminates on May 24.

Polls suggest only 35 per cent of 2.8 million eligible voters will cast ballots because of confusion and disenchantment over changes made since Britain handed Hong Kong back to China last July after 156 years of colonial rule.

Under the new system, only one-third of the 60 seats will be returned by geographical constituencies in democratic balloting by the general public.

Thirty will be filled by "functional constituencies", which effectively

means voting by companies and professional groups.

The remaining 10 seats will be chosen by an 800-member committee dominated by pro-Beijing businessmen and politicians.

Although enthusiasm for the May 24 polls is low, opinion polls have shown Mr. Lee's popular democratic party and its allies will win 65 to 70 per cent of the 20 seats in the democratic portion of the election.

Pro-Beijing political parties, who have sat in an unelected interim legislature since the change in sovereignty and who benefit from the changed election rules, blasted the democrats as they launched their campaign.

Monday, Tsang Yok-Sing, leader of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong, accused "some politicians" of taking advantage of people's mistrust of China and of acting as prophets of doom in a bid to win popular support.

"They made hair-raising remarks during the 1995 elections, asking people

not to trust the Chinese government's promise of 'one country, two systems'," Mr. Tsang said.

"They said if democratic warriors like them were not elected, Hong Kong would be controlled by Beijing after the handover, and democracy, human rights, freedom and fair elections would vanish."

"After some of them joined the legislative council, they did nothing constructive or helpful to electors' problems, but kept repeating their gloomy chorus," he said.

Mr. Tsang's remarks were a sharp attack on Mr. Lee, who has also been scolded by Hong Kong's China-appointed leader, Tung Chee-Hwa, for "bad-mouthing" the territory.

Mr. Lee is Hong Kong's most popular politician because of his outspoken criticism of Tung and Communist-ruled Beijing.

He is seen as a beacon of democracy and de facto opposition leader. Hong Kong's 6.6 million people have never had a chance to elect a leader directly.

Communist speaker of Russian lower house backs Kiriyenko

MOSCOW (AFP) — Gennady Seleznyov, the Communist speaker of the lower house State Duma, said Tuesday he supported the candidacy of Sergei Kiriyenko for prime minister, Interfax reported.

"The candidacy of Sergei Kiriyenko for the post of prime minister must be confirmed," Mr. Seleznyov told reporters after a meeting with President Boris Yeltsin, who has insisted on Mr. Kiriyenko being confirmed as prime minister.

Leftist parties in parliament previously instructed their deputies to vote against Mr. Kiriyenko's candidacy. Mr. Seleznyov is seen as a moderate, though influential, figure in the

Communist party leadership.

Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov has argued that Mr. Yeltsin's renomination of Mr. Kiriyenko violates the constitution, and that the 35-year-old technocrat is too young and inexperienced to be prime minister.

But Mr. Seleznyov said Mr. Yeltsin was intent on sticking with his young protégé, and that parliament should not jeopardise its own future by vetoing the candidate and risking dissolution.

"For me it is a thousand times more important to preserve the Duma and let it work for its full constitutional mandate," Mr.

Seleznyov said.

The Duma, which has scheduled a second vote on Mr. Kiriyenko's candidacy for Friday, faces dissolution and fresh parliamentary elections if it rejects the president's candidate three times.

Deputies voted by 186 votes to 143 last Friday against Mr. Kiriyenko's candidacy.

Mr. Seleznyov said Mr. Yeltsin "did not give any orders to dissolve the Duma, but said he would make use of his constitutional right," if the Lower House of Parliament rejected Mr. Kiriyenko three times.

Barring dissolution, parliamentary elections are not

due until December 1999.

"I warned the president that the result of the second round vote might not be what he is expecting, but the president intends firmly to present Kiriyenko's candidacy," Mr. Seleznyov said.

He added that Mr. Kiriyenko would take proposals by both houses of parliament into consideration when forming his government and would "continue talks with parliamentary groups up to Friday to reply to all questions left unanswered after the first vote."

Mr. Yeltsin for his part was satisfied with his talks with the parliament speaker, his spokesman Sergei Yastrzhembsky said.

S. African foreign minister visits jailed East Timorese leader

JAKARTA (AFP) — Visiting South African Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo was believed to have met Tuesday with jailed East Timorese pro-independence leader Xanana Gusmao here.

Mr. Nzo arrived at Jakarta's Cipinang jail at a few minutes past 1:00 P.M. (0630 GMT) and left one hour later, witnesses said. He made no comment to the press.

Earlier Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas told journalists that he was to meet Tuesday "with Xanana Gusmao at the Cipinang jail."

Mr. Alatas, speaking after joining Mr. Nzo in talks with Indonesia's President Suharto, said Mr. Nzo had come as a special envoy of South African leader Nelson Mandela, who made the request in a personal letter Mr. Nzo delivered to Mr. Suharto.

"President Mandela asked in his letter, that Foreign Minister Nzo be given the opportunity to meet with Xanana Gusmao and we have already agreed," Mr. Alatas said.

Mr. Gusmao was jailed for life in May 1994 for plotting against the state and illegal possession of firearms. Mr. Suharto later commuted the sentence to a 20-year jail term.

Until his 1992 arrest, Mr. Gusmao was the leader of the East Timor separatist movement, Fretilin, which has been fighting the Indonesian presence there since the area was invaded in 1975 and annexed a year later.

Mr. Mandela last year pledged help in reaching a solution to the East Timor situation. Mr. Nzo said, stressing any assistance would remain within the context of a U.N. initiative already underway.

In July last year after a visit with Mr. Gusmao, Mr. Mandela called for the resistance leader's release, saying it was an essential step in resolving the conflict in the former Portuguese colony. Lisbon severed ties with Jakarta shortly after Indonesia sent its troops into East Timor.

The United Nations, which still views Lisbon as the administrator of East Timor, has since 1983 sponsored talks between Indonesia and Portugal aimed at reaching a peaceful settlement in the dispute.

Mr. Nzo said Mr. Suharto had briefed him on the progress of the U.N.-sponsored talks. The South African minister is scheduled to leave Indonesia for Singapore later Tuesday.

Yeltsin to challenge war booty law

MOSCOW (AFP) — President Boris Yeltsin warned Tuesday he would challenge a law that bans the return to Germany of cultural treasures looted by wartime Soviet forces, despite being ordered to sign the controversial legislation by Russia's top court.

Mr. Yeltsin vowed he would not scrap his plans to return the priceless "trophy art" pilloled at the end of World War II, despite being ordered last week by the Constitutional Court to sign the trophy art bill into law.

The Russian president said he had yet to heed the court's instruction and sign the law, which forbids the return of all cultural treasures pillaged by the Red Army, and stressed that he planned to appeal to the top court to challenge the substance and legality of the parliamentary bill.

"The law has not yet been signed," Mr. Yeltsin told journalists before talks with his Acting Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov.

"I have prepared and will sign today a petition to the Constitutional Court questioning how we can understand its ruling when there were so many serious mistakes" when the war booty law was originally passed in parliament, Mr. Yeltsin said.

The Constitutional Court

has not examined the substance of this law. It has only looked at its form," Mr. Yeltsin added.

Mr. Yeltsin's spokesman Sergei Yastrzhembsky added that the president would undoubtedly sign the trophy art bill as required by the court, but would then take up his challenge over the substance and legality of the law, Interfax reported.

Failure to sign the law would amount to a challenge to the authority of the supreme Russian court, instituted by Mr. Yeltsin's own 1993-vintage constitution. Parliament moved to pass the trophy art bill to prevent the return of all cultural treasures brought to the Soviet Union during World War II, "whoever their current owners may be or whatever the circumstances under which they were acquired."

Mindful of the damage it would cause to Russia's fledgling partnership with Germany, Mr. Yeltsin vetoed the bill, but parliament summoned enough votes to override his veto in April 1997.

Mr. Yeltsin has continued to contest the legislation, however, arguing that deputies violated voting procedures by resorting to postal votes in order to override his veto.

The Constitutional Court

stepped into the row between president and parliament by ordering Mr. Yeltsin to sign the bill, arguing that as parliament had overridden his veto to pass the legislation, he could not procrastinate further.

The original trophy art bill bans "illegal export of this Russian property" and considers the goods "compensation for the damage caused to the cultural heritage" of the Soviet Union during the war against Nazi Germany.

The booty includes 300,000 works of art, including the famed Priam's Treasure excavated in 1873 from the presumed site of the ancient city of Troy, two million books and three kilometres of archives.

After insisting for decades that there were no plundered artworks in Kremlin cellars or the vaults of Russian museums, the country has been gradually bringing the treasures to light in recent years.

Paintings by Renoir, Manet, van Gogh, Degas and Gauguin have all turned up in exhibitions in Saint Petersburg and Moscow, and Priam's Treasure has been given a room in Moscow's Pushkin Museum.

Taleban welcome senior U.S. envoy's Afghan visit

KABUL (AFP) — The Taleban militia Tuesday welcomed U.S. special envoy Bill Richardson's forthcoming visit to Afghanistan, saying it would help restore the war-ravaged country's links with the outside world.

Mr. Richardson, Washington's ambassador to the United Nations, is due here Friday for a one-day visit which will include talks with the Taleban's rivals in the northern cities of Fajzabad and Shibergha.

"We believe this trip is significant," a Taleban spokesman, Mulla Wakil Ahmad Mutawakel, told AFP.

"We hope the trip has a positive role in settling the

Afghan issue and also in restoring Afghanistan's relations with the outside world," he said by telephone from the religious militia's headquarters in southern Afghanistan.

Accompanied by senior U.S. officials, Mr. Richardson will press the Taleban militia, which holds two-thirds of the country and the capital Kabul, and the opposition forces which control several northern provinces, to initiate a dialogue to end bloodshed.

He is also expected to discuss the human rights situation, particularly restrictions on women introduced by the Taleban and obstacles to United Nations aid operations in Afghanistan.

Mr. Mutawakel did not say what message Mr. Richardson, the first senior U.S. official to visit Afghanistan in 20 years, was bringing for the Afghan people.

The Taleban had not yet been given an official list of items to be raised in the talks, the spokesman said, although he believed the issues of women and education would be on the agenda.

The visit has raised hopes here the United States might embark on a direct role in fostering peace in Afghanistan, after interest in the country waned following the pullout of the former Soviet forces in 1988.

U.N. faults France, Switzerland, Brunei over asylum seekers

GENEVA (AFP) — The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) criticised France, Switzerland and Brunei Tuesday for handing-over to Malaysian police 27 Indonesians seeking asylum in their embassies.

"They could have waited a little longer since these people need to be heard" so as to determine whether they are valid political refugees, said UNHCR spokesman Kris Janowski.

The French, Swiss and Brunei embassies in Kuala Lumpur handed over the 28 asylum seekers Friday — a week after they climbed

into the mission compounds in a bid to avoid deportation.

All the illegal immigrants were from Aceh province in north Sumatra to the west of peninsular Malaysia.

They argued that they faced reprisals back home because of a low-level separatist campaign which has rumbled on in the province since the 1970s.

Another 22 immigrants who took refuge in the U.S. embassy and the UNHCR compound in the Malaysian capital were still waiting for their fate to be decided Tuesday.

The UNHCR and the United States are seeking to determine if the immigrants genuinely face political persecution or are just economic refugees.

Mr. Janowski said the UNHCR had not been consulted by the three embassies who decided to hand the Indonesians over to the police.

The UNHCR has expressed concern because Malaysian police last year failed to respect an agreement not to expel Indonesians who had sought refuge in the Swiss and Dutch embassies. Some had been deported, the spokesman said.

German policeman surrenders after murder

TRAUNSTEIN, Germany (AFP) — A German policeman who shot dead one man and seriously wounded a fellow officer gave himself up Tuesday, together with a hostage.

The 32-year-old officer, whose identity was not revealed, surrendered to police in the town of Piding in Bavaria. The hostage was unharmed.

Monday evening, the policeman allegedly shot and killed a 25-year-old man in Bad-

Klosterlausnitz in eastern Germany. The victim had tried to intervene in a violent quarrel between the officer and his former girlfriend.

The policeman fled in a BMW, only to find himself stopped at a random police checkpoint on the motorway linking Munich and the Austrian city of Salzburg.

Realising the car was marked, he opened fire without warning on his fellow officers — hitting one in the chest and arm — before swapping

cars and speeding off.

He later grabbed a 28-year-old hostage from the toilets at a motorway rest stop.

The officer managed to cross the border and stayed in Salzburg for four hours, before returning to Piding on the German side of the frontier.

As he was driving a police car, police said they were able to remain in regular contact with the officer, and finally managed to convince him to turn himself in.

'Flexibility on both sides would move Palestinian-Israeli track forward' Interview

Mordechai expects 2nd redeployment 'soon'

Following are excerpts from an interview with Israeli Minister of Defence Yitzhak Mordechai conducted by Jordan Times reporter Alia A. Toukan, in Tel Aviv last week.

On the Palestinian-Israeli track

Q- Three months ago you said that if there was no movement on the peace track you would resign — what's happened with that?

A- ... I think after that statement our government decided to respect the 2nd further redeployment and to draw a map that shows security needs... and what we call national needs in the area... but at the same time... the Palestinians have to do what has already been signed...

Q- There are reports that apart from the 13% everyone is talking about in the American proposal there is also a 14% that will be moved from Israeli control to joint Palestinian-Israeli control. Is that true?

A- I don't want to talk about any per cent that is part of the negotiations. But I would like to say that if both sides become a little bit flexible and if each tried to understand the problems of the other side, I think there can be (movement) forward.

Q- But for instance, [Prime Minister] Netanyahu has made statements that he is not willing to go above nine per cent, and reportedly you have made statements that 11 per cent would be OK. What's the difference? What does the 2 per cent [difference] signify?

A- The problem is the security, because in the area there are Israeli villages, Palestinian villages, there are refugee camps, roads... there are security problems. It is very complicated, [it] cannot be divided this piece is for you, and this piece is for me. Each per cent has a lot of security problems...

Q- But the 2 per cent difference...
A- The two per cent difference makes a big security problem for Israel.

Q- But what 2 per cent are you willing to give up that Netanyahu, for instance, isn't?

A- I don't want to go into details. I think that Netanyahu, and Arik [Ariel] Sharon, and [Natan] Sharansky and I worked very hard in the past few days to find a way how to move with the peace process...

Q- Reportedly... Netanyahu... was calling for jumping to final status talks, and if the second redeployment happens then immediately start talking about final status issues...

A- Well it needs to first pass the second further redeployment and then to sit with the Palestinians and to sign an agreement with the Palestinians. That is the main problem and everyone knows that. From the first day of [the] Oslo agreement they understood that the final agreement was very difficult.

Q- Is there consensus within the Kitchen Cabinet that there won't necessarily be a third redeployment?

A- No. We think it is necessary to discuss

the third further redeployment with the final agreement, but I'm not sure it will be possible yet, we don't know yet.

Q- But you're not sure to have a third redeployment?

A- No. You know this is one part of the discussion about the third further redeployment. We would like to achieve agreement with the Palestinians to tell them... let's talk about the final agreement all together. I'm not sure the Palestinians will accept that...

Q- But the second redeployment will happen?

A- I think the second further redeployment will happen, and we have to discuss and find a way what to do with the third further redeployment.

Q- Will the second redeployment happen soon?

A- I think so.

Q- How soon?

A- I don't know how soon, but I think everybody is serious now and understands that we [should] spend the time and make a decision.

Q- Is it likely to be a double digit redeployment?

A- It has to be large and it has to not damage our security. This is the formula.

On final status issues and negotiations:

Q- In terms of a future Palestinian 'entity' — remember [communications adviser to the prime minister] David Bar Ilan made statements in December 1996 that there is agreement there will be a Palestinian state of some sort but the boundaries and the powers [this state will have] are widely disputed, but call it what you want, it will be a state...

A- I don't want to discuss this now, I think it is one of the parts that will have to be discussed when we are talking about the final agreement, the boundaries... those are the subjects that will have to be discussed in the final agreement. I don't want to make any statements that may damage and won't be any help... it needs to be negotiated with the Palestinians for the final agreement will deal with a lot of subjects, on some subjects we will have to be flexible, and on some, they will have to be flexible if [we] are to move forward.

Q- Do you feel that in the Kitchen Cabinet at least that you have a more moderate stand than others such as Sharon and Netanyahu, in terms of further redeployments, a future Palestinian state. [In other words] how much difference is there between the way you think?

A- I don't think there is too much difference... there are some subjects and we are discussing [them], but I find that the prime minister, and Arik Sharon, and Sharansky and I and all the others really would like to move [forward].

Q- In terms of Jordan's role in final status negotiations what do you envisage?... What do

[you] think Jordan's role should be in final status negotiations?

A- Jordan is our neighbour, we respect everything in Jordan and we respect Jordan's government and especially King Hussein, and I am sure that Jordan will continue to be our neighbour and we will continue to build a warm and close relationship with Jordan, and we respect everything in Jordan... and any decision that will be made in Jordan.

Q- But in terms of when the negotiations take place between the Palestinians and Israelis on final status issues such as Jerusalem, boundaries, etc... do you expect Jordan to take a role or not?

A- I think from time to time it needs to have a support from Jordan. I don't think there is any formula how to negotiate with the final agreement — that is the problem... That will be the main subject after we finish second further redeployment. Let us finish this objective and then talk about the future.

Q- In terms of "security" maps, apparently Sharon has... his version, and Netanyahu came out with the Allon Plus map a year ago, and I [understand] that you have a map and it's slightly more moderate than everyone else's. Are there any variations on Netanyahu's or Sharon's maps?

A- There is only one map now. The [defence] minister's map and that is the map of the cabinet and the government, and there are no other maps. There is only one map.

Q- But there are principles on what [Israel] wouldn't give up even if there is a Palestinian state or entity. And generally they are talking about a belt along the Jordan Valley, two huge settlement blocs, at least, 2 highways running east-west.

A- You are trying to negotiate with me about the final agreement. I don't want to make any statements now about any final agreements. Of course, I have my idea and my map in my head...

Q- But Netanyahu has made a couple of statements about retaining the Jordan Valley strip because of a threat from the east, whatever he means...

A- Yes, we need an area that gives us the ability to defend our state against any future threat, [not necessarily a present one], and I think it is part of our security needs to secure the Israeli state... But all those subjects have to be discussed [in depth] in the future.

On Jordanian-Israeli relations

Q- You have been quoted as saying that you view peace with Jordan as a "strategic" one. What do you mean by that?

A- I mean it is not a short term peace agreement, it is long term. It is strategic because it is dealing with support and giving advantage to Jordan and Israel. In everything: militarily, society, economy, many objectives can be achieved and [improved] when we have a

strategic peace. There are some places they have a tactical peace not a strategic one. With Lebanon, to achieve a peace, we only want a tactical peace, to have security with Lebanon. With Jordan it is completely different, it is so important to both states...

Q- The view generally in Jordan is that in Israel there isn't sufficient understanding in the Israeli political establishment, and even in the security establishment of the interconnectedness of the Palestinian issue to Jordan, that if there is no movement on the Palestinian-Israeli track, there is only so far you can move on the Jordanian-Israeli track. How much understanding is there of this in Israel?

A- In Israel there is understanding that [by] achieving an agreement with the Palestinians, it is serving the peace agreement with Jordan. We understand that there is a large Palestinian population in Jordan, and they are paralysed and looking [at] what is [happening]... but I'm sure if we succeed to achieve an agreement with the Palestinians, it serves the peace with Jordan...

Q- But is there, for instance, a belief that there has to be movement on the second redeployment and eventually on final status issues — does Jordan come into play, that part of the reason why Israel has to move is not only for itself and the Palestinians, but also for Jordan?

A- ... I think King Hussein and Prince Hassan [are] helping the peace process and the agreement with the Palestinians, and from time to time we are asking them for support and to give help...

Q- In terms of the March 10 meeting during the Crown Prince's visit to Tel Aviv, ... the main thing that came out of it was the resumption of full security cooperation and intelligence cooperation. Is that true?

A- Generally speaking we have close cooperation and coordination [on] the Jordan Valley and the boundaries between both sides, and from time to time we have to talk about [it] and to see how we can improve [it], that was the main reason why Crown Prince Hassan came here, to find that our cooperation is supporting both sides and what we can do to improve it... He [also] came to see how some other subjects can be improved, economy and water problems, Aqaba airport... and the Dead Sea and other projects...

Q- My understanding is that after the Misha'al affair on Sept. 25, apart from border security cooperation, everything went... so now everything is back to normal, intelligence cooperation, full security cooperation, like it was before Sept. 25.

A- Again, I don't want to go into detail. I am very happy about our military cooperation between Jordan and Israel...

Q- The Misha'al affair, has the lesson been learnt in Israel?

A- Who is Misha'al?

Q- Sharon hasn't forgotten who Misha'al is.

A- You know what "Masha'al" is in Hebrew?

Example.

Q- Sharon's comments [March 14, 1998] when he said basically that Israel would still go after Misha'al but not on Jordanian soil, and this was five days after Crown Prince Hassan came here. And even though he [Sharon] sent a clarification letter [saying] that Israel respects Jordan's sovereignty, what can you say to assure the Jordanian public that such a thing won't happen again?

A- What Sharon said you have to ask Minister Sharon. If you are asking me, I would like that all of us cooperate again, to do all our best [to deter] any terrorist activities or orders from one state against the other, and to cooperate together and to do all our best not to do anything against the interest of the other side...

Q- But when Sharon uses the statement "we respect Jordan's sovereignty" — does respecting Jordan's sovereignty include not only the refrain from killing of Jordanians on Jordanian soil, but [also] the killing of a Jordanian wherever they are?

A- ... I would like to respect the Jordanian state and the Jordanian people...

Q- Wherever they are?

A- Yes, I hope that no Jordanian authority will do anything against Israeli people, especially not using terror ideology or terror activities against our population. That is the key point between both sides.

Q- Is the fact that there is a Hamas office in Jordan, this a problem for Israel?

A- There are some problems with some of the Hamas if they transport some of their ideology and especially if they try to use terror ideology and activity against Israel. And I hope Jordan's security forces will do all their best that anyone in Jordan does not take advantage to do such things against Israeli state, especially not to use terror against our population.

Q- Jordan insists that the Hamas office is nothing but five people who don't take part in any activities against Israel.

A- Well, I'll make it clear that [what is needed] is to make sure that there will be no activity against the Israeli state.

Q- Who is Khalid Misha'al? In Jordan they insist that there is nothing against him, and even some Israelis say he [was] just a soft target after the July 30 bombing, and that there is nothing against him.

A- We passed one problem with Khalid Misha'al, I don't want another...

Q- What does Israel expect Jordanian authorities to do in light of recent [Israeli] reports that the Hamas office in Amman has been behind terror activities in Israel?

A- ... We expect that as a neighbouring country which lives in peace with Israel, Jordan will make every effort to prevent the terrorism, and we hope that is the way it will be.

Israel's odd couple still squabbling at 50

By Howard Goller
Reuters

TEL AVIV — Israel's legendary odd couple, Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Shamir, seldom see each other, even though their offices in Tel Aviv are only a floor apart.

As the country they helped create turns 50, the two sole surviving former prime ministers stand as divided as ever. Like fellow Israelis, they rarely see eye-to-eye on issues of Middle East peacemaking.

But when Israel marks its first half century, both insist they'll have plenty to be proud of.

Peres and Shamir, both born in Poland, are among a handful of main political players from Israel's birth in 1948 who are still alive.

Both left the main stage of Israeli politics reluctantly, having lost elections.

In separate interviews granted to mark 50 years of statehood, which falls on April 30 under the Hebrew calendar, the two former leaders spoke of their views of Israel's tumultuous past and present and their visions for the future.

Both spelled out unequivocal displeasure with the present holder of Israel's top job, 48-year-old Likud Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Each of course had different reasons. On one achievement — the vast immigration of Jews to Israel — there was shared pride.

Both men assail Netanyahu

Silver-haired Peres, 74, the labour prime minister from 1984-86 and 1995-96, is hailed worldwide as a champion of peace. A protégé of founding father David Ben-Gurion, Peres helped build the defences of a nascent Israel and shared the Nobel Peace Prize for his part in seeking peace with the Palestinians.

Short and shy, Shamir, 82, Likud prime minister from 1983-84 and 1986-1992, is remembered as a bulldog guarding the land of Israel. An

underground fighter at Israel's birth, he struggled to drive Britain from Palestine. Later he was a Mossad agent.

For more than five years, Peres and Shamir shared power in a marriage of "national unity." Deadlocked over peace moves, it ended in 1990 in a divorce that was anything but amicable.

Both men remain active, starting work by 8 a.m. Still in parliament, Peres is launching a Middle East Peace Centre and writing books while Shamir, now retired from politics, writes newspaper articles and stays fit by walking.

"The young generation is less interested in theoretical principles than in practical matters. From certain points of view it is worrying because a nation without principles in my opinion cannot advance"
— Yitzhak Shamir

For Peres, who envisages a comprehensive Middle East peace deal in perhaps 10 to 15 years, Netanyahu is moving too slowly. For Shamir, who foresees an accord in perhaps another half a century, Netanyahu is going too fast and ceding too much.

"For peace you need time — time for discussing, for thinking," Shamir said. He criticised Netanyahu for his readiness to cede even a small percentage of the West Bank which

Shamir regards as Israel's God-given biblical birthright.

"It is the lack of principles that disturbs me," said Shamir, whose nerves of steel in a battle with President George Bush over West Bank Jewish settlements plunged U.S.-Israeli relations into crisis in the early 1990s.

"The young generation is less interested in theoretical principles than in practical matters. From certain points of view it is worrying because a nation without principles in my opinion cannot advance," said Shamir sharply.

He brushed aside characterisations of himself as a stubborn man who eats nails for breakfast, saying with a laugh: "all of these are exaggerations — I don't eat nails." But he added: "it's right — I am a man of principles."

Asked who had won his fight with Bush and then Secretary of State James Baker over Jewish settlements, Shamir said: "I think that we (won)... Because settlements continue." But he said there was much more work to do.

Battle rages over swapping land for peace

For his part Peres is convinced that Middle East countries are shedding old ways, abandoning army camps for university campuses and aiming to improve life.

Netanyahu, reluctant to make territorial compromises for peace, was behind the times, Peres said.

"You know you can be young in age and old in mind," Peres said. "He really doesn't read the map correctly." "What you see today in the Middle East is a disappearing landscape politically and economically. All of the leaders, most of them — it's not a matter of age, it's a matter of mentality — were born in a different age," Peres said.

Last December, Peres backed unequivocally the creation of a separate Palestinian state previously rejected by the main party leaders as

a threat to Israel's survival.

"In a strange way, in order for Israel to remain Jewish, we need the Palestinian state. Otherwise it (Israel) shall become a bi-national state or, if you want, a bi-national tragedy," Peres said.

He called it a moral choice for Israel similar to the one he said had prompted him and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to seal the secret breakthrough peace deal with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in Oslo in 1993.

"We went to Oslo because we felt that we can no longer historically and morally control or dominate Arab life"
— Shimon Peres

"We cannot have just a territorial homeland. We must have a spiritual homeland. Israel cannot exist just by cultivating the land and defending the borders," Peres said. "We went to Oslo because we felt that we can no longer historically and morally control or dominate Arab life."

Shamir vehemently dismissed any suggestion that Israel must swap land for peace. "I don't think Israel has anything to give up. It's a very small country," said Shamir, whose entire family was wiped out in the Nazi Holocaust of World War II.

"I don't see any nation in the world today that is ready — even for peace — to give up a part of its territory," he said. "You know, territory is a part of the nation. It's not only a practical matter of having a per cent less or more. It's a part of our life, a part of our culture, ourself."

He insisted that Palestinians would never recognise Israel's existence and that they still hoped to liquidate it. Under his leadership, Shamir said, the best the Palestinians could have hoped to achieve was full autonomy and never statehood.

Asked why surveys showed hatred

of Arabs still a problem in Israel, Shamir blamed years of military confrontation and a venomous Arab media. For his part Peres said some Israelis had yet to learn that Arabs, like Jews, were human beings.

Immigration Israel's greatest achievement

In a rare public show of agreement, the two men proudly rattled off numbers to dramatise Israel's success in absorbing immigrants.

Israel's Jewish population had grown from 650,000 at its founding to around five million in 1998, Peres said.

"I mean a nation that was considered dead, exiled, spread over all places without a centre, without a real will for life, without a capacity to understand modern life, all of a sudden, got together again and emerged as an old and a new nation," Peres said.

For Shamir, immigration was Israel's greatest accomplishment in 50 years. But it was also his biggest disappointment. Israel could not be a normal country as long as 13.5 million Jews still lived outside it, he said.

"You cannot find another nation in the world in this same position," said Shamir, who as prime minister oversaw the arrival of hundreds of thousands of Russian immigrants as the cold war ended. He said the Arabs hated nothing more than the waves of Jewish immigration to Israel.

Both men, veterans of social battles that have made world news time and again, shrugged off as a fact of life the deep divisions in Israel

along religious, ethnic and political lines. "Division was always a feature of Israeli internal life... Even in biblical times," Shamir said.

Israelis were always divided, Peres agreed, but 50 years ago the dangers facing their small nation under siege united them to a point that blurred the differences. Now the divisions had risen to the surface but he said the future did not worry him because a vibrant democracy would tolerate them.

What did concern Peres — to an extent that he called it his greatest disappointment in 50 years — was an electoral system that gave the power to Jewish religious parties to determine government policy and impose their will on society.

He cautioned that Israel would find it impossible to cope with modern times should religious parties become more powerful in the next 50 years and urged a revamping of the electoral system to limit the number of political parties to two or three.

Despite their varied views and visions, both men insisted that Israelis had reason to be proud of their first 50 years. Both praised Israel's brain power and economic development in the face of hardship. Peres said something in the Jewish personality, after centuries of suffering, nonetheless made celebrating difficult. He said this explained why there was so little joy in the air.

"I was recently in an American audience and they asked me, 'look you have so many achievements, why aren't you happy?' and my answer was to be happy is un-Jewish. We are incapable of permitting ourselves to be happy."

"We have so much to remember and we have to carry so many bitter memories and also because we are afraid to be satisfied," Peres said.

"I wouldn't say that," Shamir countered, true to form. Remarking on Israel's growth through immigration, he added, with a hearty laugh: "everyday I am celebrating."

Jordan records higher exports, lower imports in '97—Mulki

AMMAN (J.T.) — Industry, Trade, and Supply Minister Hani Mulki Tuesday said Jordanian exports in 1997 have increased by 2.6 per cent to reach JD 1,066 million.

In an interview with the Arabic daily Al Ra'i, Dr. Mulki also said Jordanian imports fell by 4.1 per cent to reach JD2,909 million.

The minister added that total investments have risen by nine per cent to reach JD379 million at the end of last year. Direct investments grew in 1997 by 60 per cent to reach JD124 million.

Dr. Mulki stressed that work is underway to increase the number of industrial estates in the various parts of the Kingdom, noting that the private sector is allowed to establish such estates.

He said a total of 465 items necessary as inputs for industrial production were exempted from customs duties. Moreover, the number of industrial companies receiving the ISO certification has increased from 14 companies in 1996 to 92 companies in 1997.

On the trade sector, Dr. Mulki said external trade has won new grounds, noting that the number of export markets was grown by 17 per cent.

The minister said Jordan is finalising the necessary steps to join the World Trade Organisation (WTO), voicing hope that it will be able to join this organisation during the first half of next year.

He also said Jordan, along with six other Arab countries, have signed the Arab Free Trade Agreement and has started implementing it. The six other countries are Egypt, Kuwait, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Bahrain.

On economic cooperation with Iraq, Dr. Mulki said Jordan has benefited from the trade protocol with Baghdad by limiting exports to Iraq to products carrying a value added input in excess of 30 per cent.

Jordan has also benefited from the oil-for-food deal as it had been able to export JD113 million worth of Jordanian products to Iraq in 1997, the minister said.

He concluded by pointing out that the balance of trade in 1997 has registered an increase of five per cent over the 1996 figure.

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Israeli shekel falls 1.8% against dollar

TEL AVIV (R) — The Israeli shekel fell 1.8 per cent against the dollar on Tuesday, continuing to slide in markets nervous over government plans for foreign currency liberalisation at the end of the month.

The Bank of Israel set the representative rate at 3.7580 shekels to the dollar against 3.6920 on Thursday.

There were no representative rates on Friday and Monday because of the Passover and Easter holidays although interbank trading took place on those days.

Since the beginning of April, the shekel has fallen nearly 4.5 per cent against the dollar in a jittery market reaction to the liberalisation plans.

On Sunday, the Bank of Israel said that as of May 1 it would allow Israeli banks to use foreign currency to buy shekels from overseas institutions, a step that will pave the way to making the shekel fully convertible.

The central bank said foreigners would be able to trade in shekel options and futures without restrictions.

According to details leaked to the media, the plan also includes allowing Israelis to hold unlimited amounts of foreign currency in accounts at home and abroad as well as to use foreign currency for domestic transactions.

The shekel's sharp depreciation is expected to accelerate inflation in April and has reduced hopes for an interest rate cut at the end of the month.

Some believe there still may be room for a decline in interest rates, given the economic slowdown and low inflation levels of recent months.

Moshe Gavish, general manager of Mercantile Discount Bank, said it was unclear what effect the shekel depreciation would have on interest rates.

"There are pressures regarding interest rates that

are not fixed according to the dollar rate but, for example, by the state of the economy and unemployment," he told Israel Radio.

Tuesday's exchange rate was little changed from the level reached on Monday in interbank trading.

Dealers characterised trade as very nervous on Tuesday and the shekel fell to nearly 3.79 to the dollar in the early morning before recovering later in the day.

The rate for the basket of foreign currencies, to which the shekel is pegged, was fixed on Tuesday at 4.0152 shekels against 3.9379 shekels on Thursday.

The shekel traded against the yen at 2.8954 shekels per 100 yen compared with 2.7724 shekels on Thursday, and against the mark at 2.0668 shekels compared with 2.0262 shekels on Thursday.

Dealers said the market was fairly illiquid. "The market is very volatile but the amounts

involved are not large," a dealer at Bank Hapoalim said.

He attributed the low level of activity to the Passover holiday and to public uncertainty over the government's liberalisation programme.

Dealers expect Israel's Forex Market to remain very volatile in coming days.

The dealer at Bank Hapoalim forecast the dollar could rise above 3.80 shekels. "Right now the sentiment is bullish for the dollar," he said.

If the shekel becomes fully convertible, volatility in Israel's foreign currency market could be long-lasting.

"The meaning of a fully convertible shekel is that there is less supervision over the shekel, the market is more active and this can result in a situation where the market will be more volatile, not just over the next few months," Mr. Gavish said.

IMF head presses Japan, warns Indonesia, promises 'more teeth'

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The International Monetary Fund (IMF) chief Michel Camdessus on Tuesday pressed Japan to further open its economy and warned that Indonesia would pay dearly if it failed to comply with IMF reform measures.

The head of the IMF, addressing journalists here, also defended the IMF's projection of zero growth for Japan this year but said he was "reassured" about medium-term prospects for global economic momentum.

Camdessus was speaking ahead of a meeting Thursday of the IMF's policy-making interim committee, where he said participants would discuss ways to "give more teeth" to IMF surveillance of national economies.

In South Korea, where the fund last year arranged a \$57 billion rescue package, "we are witnessing a remarkable phenomenon," he said, hailing Seoul's adherence to an IMF programme to overhaul the economy.

South Korea is "regaining market confidence quicker than we expected," he said.

Mr. Camdessus likewise had kind words for Latin America, where he said governments had transformed their economies after the turbulence of the 1980s and as a result had been able to resist the Asian crisis.

"Latin America has resisted and its growth has only been mildly affected," he said.

Informed that Japanese Finance Minister Hikaru Matsunaga had been irritated with the IMF's zero growth projection, contained its World Economic Outlook report issued Monday, Mr. Camdessus replied: "We have produced for Japan our professional guess ... but we would love to be wrong."

He said it was entirely possible that Japanese growth could be "significantly more positive" this year in light of fiscal stimulus measures — including deep tax cuts — announced last week by the Japanese government.

"I don't rule out at all that possibility," he said. The IMF forecast was prepared before the measures had been unveiled.

Camdessus reiterated that the fund — as does the United States — wants to see Japan serve as an "engine of growth" for struggling economies in Asia and the rest of the world.

While Tokyo authorities have taken steps "in the right direction," he said, "we are not there yet" and called for reforms of a "structural nature."

"There are still a lot of things to do to open Japan to the rest of the world, even beyond the Big Bang initiative."

The Big Bang, which took effect April 1, was an effort to make the Japanese financial sector more competitive.

Mr. Camdessus called in particular for measures to enable the real estate market to function under "normal, market conditions" and said authorities should give "proper teeth" to banking sector reform steps.

"There you have the roots of a more buoyant Japanese economy," Mr. Camdessus also warned Tuesday that Indonesia would pay a price if it reneged on promises made under a third pact with the fund to

put its economy in order.

He said Indonesia had already paid a huge cost by not sticking to two earlier agreements with the fund, which stitched together a global rescue package worth about \$40 billion.

"Why do I believe that the Indonesian authorities will stick to it now? Because they know pretty well the cost of not accepting and adhering to it earlier," he said. "The cost to the country has been tremendous."

When the IMF's interim committee convenes here Thursday, according to Mr. Camdessus, it will debate proposals to forge a new "architecture" for the international financial system.

One of the key goals, he said, would be to strengthen the fund's surveillance mechanisms in countries that participate in its programmes — how to "give (them) more teeth."

The committee would also consider measures that bolster the role of the IMF in shoring up domestic financial systems and ensure that it is provided with as much

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Consult a foreigner about recent events. Some of the information you've received may be in error. Check it out before you base any decisions on it. By this afternoon, the truth should be apparent. Discuss it tonight to figure out your next course of action.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) There's still talk going on behind the scenes. Yesterday there was more speculation than fact. Now it looks like the other way around. Interesting how it's turning out. It's not quite like you expected! Stay tuned in, so you don't accidentally make a move in the wrong direction.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) There's too much for you to do it by yourself, and there's no point in trying. You'll just make the problem bigger. You need to divide this chore up among several people. Schedule a meeting this morning to figure out how. You might end up with nothing to do!

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) The workload is intense, but you're learning a great deal. There are changes underway and you need to be alert in order to use them to your advantage. You'll also need to use skills you're learning. It will take years to master them, and this is good opportunity to practise.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Finally, conditions are getting better. You're in a good mood, and so is the one you love. If you don't have a sweetheart, you could be in for a big surprise. Hang around a place you enjoy being. That's your best bet for meeting someone you'll enjoy being with.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You and your mate — and any roommates you might have — are stirring things up at home. It's disruptive, but exciting. It's time to see the change occurring that you've been looking forward to for so long. This might be expensive, but don't let that stop you. Go ahead and make your dreams come true.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) A surprising development this morning could really tickle your funny bone. Don't create a disruption. There's still work to be done, and you're a rather high profile character. People tend to watch what you're doing, simply because you're so cute.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) A co-worker you've been hassling with seems to have the advantage. The good news is that more money is coming in, and soon. All the effort you've been putting in lately is starting to be acknowledged. Meanwhile, use your resources and energy to help a friend in need.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You're much stronger, and it looks like you're winning. Don't lose track of what you're doing, however. Gather all the information you can to support your idea. The details will do the convincing. Although your opinions are persuasive, they're not enough.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) A secret you've been looking for is starting to emerge. This could actually be a treasure, but it might simply be a memory you've been repressing. If you've been wondering why you behave a certain way, maybe you're about to find out.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) One thing you're learning is how to get more money. Actually, even if you had plenty, you'd find ways to spend more. That's because you have big ideas. You don't need a loan. You need a federal grant. And that could be exactly what you're learning how to get. If not, why not?

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Others rely on you when the going gets tough. That's because you're sympathetic and always seem to try to help others. That's going to be very much appreciated now. Actually, all you have to do is help the others settle down and they'll solve the problem.

Birthstone of April: Diamond — Amethyst

Malaysia lowers growth

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — Malaysia has lowered its official 1998 economic growth forecast amid the regional financial crisis and announced plans to strengthen the banking sector and improve transparency.

But the markets were less than enthused by the widely anticipated announcement which contained few concrete measures to stimulate the slowing economy or reform the finance sector, analysts said.

The country's 1998 gross domestic product (GDP) forecast would be lowered "from two to three per cent, compared to four to five per cent that I announced last December," Finance Minister Anwar Ibrahim said.

It was the second time that the official growth forecast for the year has been lowered.

Mr. Anwar, who is also deputy prime minister, told

parliament that "the government is confident that inflation rate will be curbed at between seven and eight per cent," compared to below four per cent last year.

Unemployment is also expected to rise but would be sustained at 3.5 per cent, he said.

Mr. Anwar said banks would be required to make a 20 per cent specific provision for debts not covered by collateral and reiterated that the banking system was still intact.

The government has no plans to raise a 30 per cent limit on foreign investment in the sector, he said, while holding out assurances that the banking sector was sound.

"No Malaysian banks are facing insolvency," he said. "But we cannot compromise to an IMF programme to overhaul the economy. If we soften, we may face the problems of systemic risks."

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

1 Across

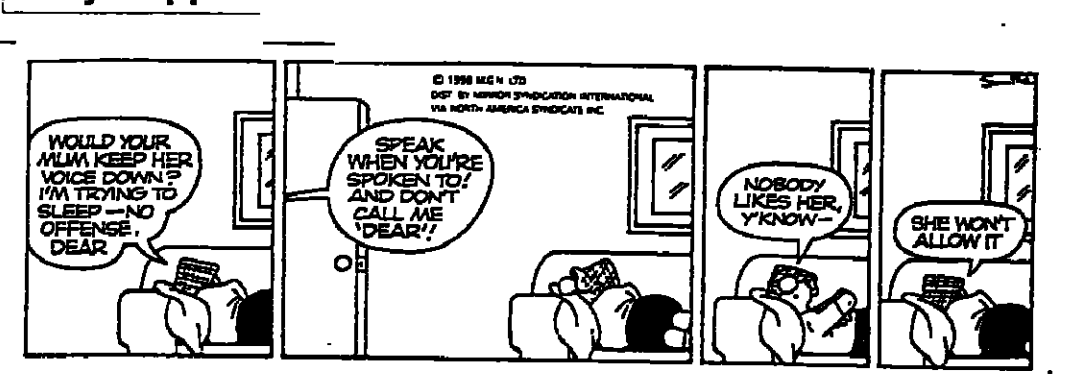
1 Disorder
2 Fathers
3 Cut corners
4 Use acid for art
5 Spicy stew
6 Putter Palmer
7 Writer Ephron
8 Manipulated
9 Sports
10 Infractions
11 Long-running TV quiz show
12 Yawmed
13 Tennis unit
14 Last letter of words?
15 Boat's rear end
16 Source for a pet abbr.
17 Round fig.
18 Two squared
19 Recycled shirt
20 Discuss again
21 1981 Bond film
22 Spirited mounts
23 Snare
24 Ginger cookie
25 Signal for help
26 On the briny
27 Night before
28 Touch lightly
29 Actress Farrow
30 Airport
31 Boarding points
32 Carlton Morse radio series
33 Insertion mark
34 Crat or mal lead-in
35 So what... is now?
36 Chew the scenery
37 Pronounce indistinctly
38 "Hud" star Pat
39 Philanthropist
40 Transmitted
41 Bohemian

8 Soft drinks
9 Two-pointers, in football
10 Fast-food magazine Ray
11 Accusation
12 Interstate distances
13 Bothersome ones
14 What's new?
15 Hide
16 Fishing hooks
17 In progress
18 Former
19 German kingdom
20 Sedan or SUV, e.g.
21 Booster rocket
22 Greek letters
23 Defi breads
24 "Breathing Lessons" writer
25 Drugs
26 Overdoes the publicity
27 Dashboard gauge
28 Affirmative
29 Grow older
30 Kind of log
31 Dumbfound
32 Breach of contract
33 Semimetallic
34 Fri. follower
35 English cathedral city
36 Gladiators' spot
37 Ultimate no
38 Kind of log
39 Dumbfound
40 Breach of contract
41 Semimetallic
42 Fri. follower
43 English cathedral city

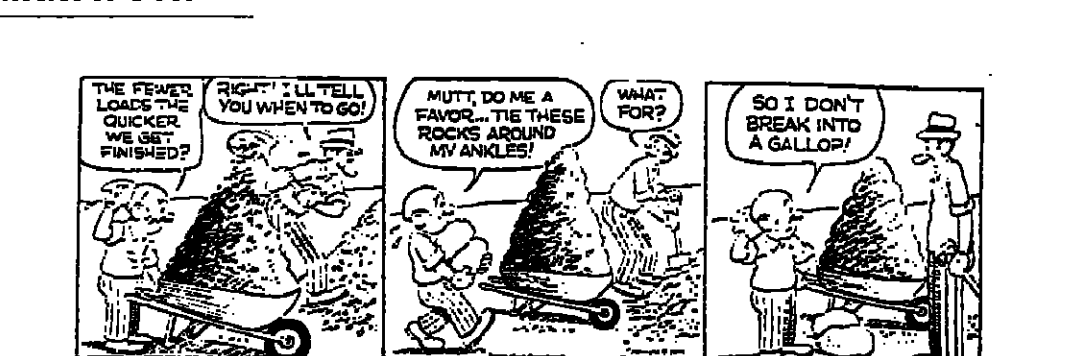
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



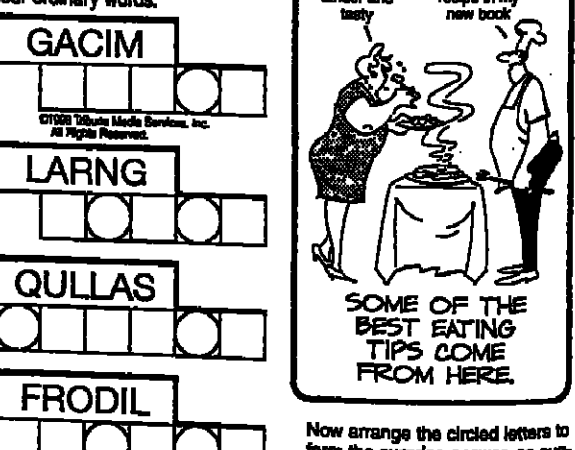
THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"Your father is lactose intolerant, tax intolerant, feminist intolerant, youth intolerant and liberal intolerant."

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Print answer here: _____ (Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumble: OXIDE FANCY GOPHER EYELET
Answer: What the carpenter gave the banker — A "FIXED" RATE

Daily

A review of news

Ekbal printing dividends at

AL EKBAI Printing and Packaging Company will be distributing dividends to shareholders following the approval of the general assembly. The company posted a net profit of JD1.2 million in 1997, compared to JD1.1 million in 1996. The net profit amounted to 12.5 per cent of the company's revenue. The company's revenue increased from JD9.6 million in 1996 to JD10.5 million in 1997. The general assembly will meet on Thursday to discuss the dividends.

Marketing problems of industry to

THERE ARE many marketing problems facing the industry, according to a report by the Jordanian Marketing Association. The report highlights the lack of marketing research, the lack of marketing education, and the lack of marketing infrastructure. The report also suggests that the industry should focus on improving its marketing strategies and practices.

REUTERS The Business

Major Currencies & Cross Rates

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP
US Dollar	1.0000	1.9363	0.6936
DE Mark	0.5547	1.0000	0.3363
GB Sterling	1.4850	3.0333	1.0000
CH Franc	0.6714	1.2098	0.3475
JP Yen	0.0077	1.3948	0.4488
CA Dollar	0.6973	1.2916	0.4224
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0128	0.3332
NL Guilder	0.4922	88.77	0.2897
FR Franc	0.1653	0.2084	0.2084

Energy

Currency	USD	JOB	SAR	£
US Dollar	1.0000	0.7090	3.7504	0.6936
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	0.2666	0.1880	0.1880
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1880	0.1880	0.1880
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8800	0.9400	0.9400
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.3631	1.3631
Kuwait Dinar	3.2744	2.3216	12.2863	12.2863
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0212	1.0212
Lebanese/1000	0.65	0.4438	2.4636	2.4636
Egyptian	0.2939	0.2084	1.4622	1.4622

Main Equity Index

Index	Value
New York DOW JONES	9062.53
London S&P 500	1113.13
Tokyo FT-SE 100	6101.5
Paris NIKKEI 225	18277.33
Frankfurt DAX	2867.08
	5374.78

JORDAN M. DAILY

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Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Ekbal printing firm to distribute dividends at a rate of 11 per cent

AL EKBAL Printing and Packaging Company will be distributing JD606,200 to shareholders following an approval from the general assembly to distribute dividends at a rate of 11 per cent. The company posted JD4 million of sales last year and generated a JD849,300 operational profit.

The net profit amounted to JD578,656 compared to JD98,959 posted in 1996, the company's annual report for 1997 showed. It said that the total of shareholders' equity increased from JD3.88 million in 1996 to JD5.6 million at the end of last year.

Board Chairman Tawfiq Fakhouri told the general assembly that the company

bought new equipment and machinery from Germany and Switzerland to equip the new permanent printing press which was in full operational situation in mid-March. He said that the new company buildings in Naur were completed and that the marketing and sales sections were consolidated within a plan to open branches for the company in Arab markets.

Mr. Fakhouri added that the company bought a special machine designed specifically for printing cigarette packs in order to meet the increasing volume of work and the size of contracts signed with some cigarette companies (Al Ra'i + Al Dastour + Al Aswaq).

Marketing problems delay launching of industry to produce baby food

"THERE ARE negotiations with investors from the United Arab Emirates and Germany to set up a plant for producing baby food in Jordan," Board chairman of the Arab International Food Factories told an ordinary session of the general assembly. He stressed that the main concern is on marketing and finding sale outlets for the product.

Chairman Abdullah Abu Khadijeh said the company did not process or import any amount of baby food due to the operational loss incurred from two shipments of baby food could not be sold by the company in the Jordanian market.

To avoid any possible initial losses from the marketing problem, the company

resorted to buying buses and purchasing shares in sister firms. Consequently, the company generated JD556,510 of earnings which translated into an after tax JD112,153 net profit after taking operational and other costs into consideration.

According to the annual report, the company's current assets stood at JD4.24 million at the end of last year out of JD6.35 million of total assets.

Mr. Abu Khadijeh assured the general assembly that the company has opted to postpone any decision on setting up a baby food factory in order to safeguard the investments of the shareholders and to avoid taking any risk that could entail the loss of funds.

United Arab Shipping forms alliance with German, Korean firms

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — The United Arab Shipping Company (UASC) has announced that it has formed an alliance with the maritime freight companies DSR-Senator of Germany and Hanjin and Cho Yang of South Korea.

"The four partners will operate under the name United Alliance under an agreement to coordinate their activities in container transport worldwide," a statement by UASC said.

UASC, based in Kuwait, belongs to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Iraq.

The coordination will include sharing of routes, and joint arrangements at ports "to provide more competitive services to clients," the statement said.

The four allied companies, which have a total of 93 ships, each week offer seven trans-Pacific links, two trans-Atlantic links, four links between Europe and Asia, and two within the Mediterranean.

The new alliance is the second in the Gulf region, following a partnership launched last year by the National Shipping Company of Saudi Arabia, the world's second largest oil transporter, and the French Compagnie Maritime d'Affrètement. The alliances, which seek to reduce operating costs through a more effective use of routes, come after shipping tariffs dropped in 1997 due to an oversupply of ships serving the Gulf.

RJ decides to modernise fleet and boost global network

By Ghaila Alul
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The debt-ridden Royal Jordanian (RJ) has decided to sell its five TriStar aircraft operating on long-haul routes as part of efforts to modernise the airline's fleet and boost its global network.

RJ President Nader Dahabi told reporters Monday.

"There is a potential buyer... The reason behind RJ's decision to sell the TriStar aircraft is purely economic," he said.

Mr. Dahabi earlier said that the national carrier will replace its ageing TriStar aircraft with new generation of European Airbus, starting June.

Last year, RJ paid the final installment on its five TriStar aircraft leased from the past 10 years from Banque Indosuez.

Officials earlier said the \$60 million TriStars were the only ones owned by RJ which has a fleet of 17 aircraft.

Mr. Dahabi told reporters that RJ, which is preparing for privatisation, has invited legal and financial advisors to evaluate the situation.

"Bids by these experts will be reviewed at the end of the month before taking further steps toward privatisation [expected to take up to 18 months]," he added.

Plans to privatise RJ, saddled with debts of over \$846 million mainly from

aircraft leases, were first floated in 1988 but held back due to a host of bureaucratic and financial reasons.

According to Mr. Dahabi, RJ is undergoing a six-month legal and financial restructuring programme which will help put it on a more profitable and a sounder administrative footing before it can operate on commercial basis.

RJ operations are currently heavily subsidised by the government.

He said an expert from the World Bank is attending RJ's meetings and has submitted a study to the Jordanian government for privatisation, to which the government is committed.

Israeli tycoon to set up investment fund in Israeli-Arab companies

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's leading business baron, Benny Gaon, plans to launch a \$100 million fund for investing in joint Israeli-Arab companies to build peace after he leaves the Koor conglomerate this summer.

Mr. Gaon, 63, has confirmed that he will step down as the head of Koor, Israel's biggest industrial

group with 21,000 employees, in July. But he has no plans to retire quietly.

Mr. Gaon said in a statement that he hopes to "privatise peace" with a fund to start up joint Israeli-Arab companies as a way to build regional cooperation. "The only thing capable of consolidating peace."

The top businessman, who refused to give details of the project, has for many years been an ardent supporter of the Israeli-Arab peace process.

The president of the Industrialists Association, Dan Propper, who proposed Mr. Gaon to head a special commission to develop relations with

Arab countries, has strongly endorsed Mr. Gaon's abilities for building regional cooperation.

"He could make an important contribution to strengthening commercial ties with the Arab World thanks to his experience and his relations with the Palestinian National Authority and neighbouring countries," Mr.

Propper said recently.

Mr. Gaon has repeatedly sought to build regional business ties participating in numerous economic conferences and in delegations of Israeli businessmen visiting such countries as Jordan, Egypt, Morocco and the Gulf Arab states.

In 1996, like most Israeli business chiefs, Mr. Gaon supported Labour's Shimon Peres for prime minister.

Since the right-wing government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu took office, Mr. Gaon has been a leading critic of Mr. Netanyahu's approach to the peace process.

He has charged that Mr. Netanyahu's "intransigent" policies could scare off foreign investors from putting money into the Israeli economy.

On the business front, Mr. Gaon has built himself a reputation for saving floundering enterprises.

When he took over Koor 10 years ago, it was part of the massive Histadrut labour union's empire and almost bankrupt with debts of \$1.5 billion.

To rescue the group, he fired thousands of employees, got rid of its least profitable activities, and balanced the books without losing the conglomerate's greatest assets, such as the civil and military electronics firm Tadiran.

Koor's net profits fell by 22 per cent last year but the conglomerate still earned \$138 million on turnover of \$3.5 billion.

The success of the turnaround encouraged the U.S. Claridge finance group, controlled by Canada's wine and spirits group Seagram, to buy 28 per cent of Koor last year.

But the arrival of the new partner also marked the end of the Gaon era at Koor as Claridge appointed Jonathan Kolber to succeed him.

"In an airplane, there can only be one pilot and the strongest shareholder has the right to fly the plane," Mr. Gaon said recently.

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000								
DE Mark	0.5547	1.0000							
GB Sterling	1.6850	3.0093	1.0000						
CH Franc	0.6714	1.2088	0.3576	1.0000					
JP Yen	0.0077	1.3948	0.4589	1.6223	1.0000				
CA Dollar	0.6973	1.2915	0.4225	0.6599	1.1111	1.0000			
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0125	0.3332	0.0837	137.12	0.0807	1.0000		
NL Guilder	0.4822	0.8677	0.2921	0.7340	63.57	0.7062	0.7632	1.0000	
FR Franc	0.1653	0.2984	0.0981	0.2459	21.37	0.2373	0.3360	0.3360	1.0000

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP	
US Dollar	1.0000								
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	1.0000							
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1800	1.0000						
Bahraini Dinar	2.65	1.8808	9.8488	1.0000					
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0303	1.0000					
Kuwait Dinar	3.2744	2.2215	12.2803	1.2343	1.0000				
Emirate Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0212	0.1028	0.9911	1.0000			
Lebanese L1000	0.65	0.4639	2.4636	2.3814	0.1998	2.4028	1.0000		
Egyptian	0.2830	0.2084	1.1022	0.1108	0.0888	1.0794	448.23	1.0000	

Energy									
Oil	Crude	Refined							
Brent	13.27	13.27							
W. Texas	13.27	13.27							
Bonny	13.27	13.27							
Dubai	11.69	11.69							
UL Gas	163.00	163.00							

JOD Cross Rates									
Currency	Buy	Sell							
US Dollar	0.708	0.710							
GB Sterling	1.1795	1.1864							
DE Mark	0.3885	0.3904							
CH Franc	0.4888	0.4711							
FR Franc	0.1158	0.1164							
JP Yen	0.5432	0.5469							
NL Guilder	0.3448	0.3468							
IT Lira	0.383	0.386							

Main Equity Indices									
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pr Ch		
New York	DOW JONES	9088.53	78.23	0.85	9095.28	9013.8	9012.3		
New York	S&P 500	1113.13	3.44	0.31	1114.08	1109.48	1109.59		
London	FT-SE 100	6101.6	-3.9	-0.06	6105.0	6083.2	6105.5		
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	16277.32	-40.28	-0.25	16414.1	16188.4	16317.8		
Paris	CAC 40	3867.68	-26.82	-0.69	3861.69	3867.68	3894.48		
Frankfurt	DAX	5374.78	57.58	1.08	5411.07	5374.06	5317.22		

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET									
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHARISAM									
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 14/04/1998									
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
350.000	251.000	ARAB BANK	14.1	1.16	2	13760	344.00	344.00	-
2.340	1.660	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	8	0.00	2	1000	1740	175	0.1
2.680	1.650	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	9.2	7.88	3	2800	5031	1.82	0.3
5.500	4.650	THE HOUSING BK.	16.9	2.71	1	5000	26600	5.35	0.3
4.180	1.810	JOR. KOWAT BANK	8	0.00	7	788	185	1.81	0.1
9.920	5.900	JOR. GULF BANK	4.1	10.14	12	13574	9232	68	0.1
4.020	1.800	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	15.0	0.00	10	1150	2047	1.80	0.3
3.900	1.800	JOR. INV. FIN. BANK	11.2	0.00	6	1300	227	1.80	0.5
2.350	1.610	JOR. INV. FIN. BANK/NEW	8	0.00	3	354	573	1.62	0.3
1.400	800	BEIT AL MAL (BEITNA)	5	17.24	3	1100	947	86	0.1
BANK SECTOR TOTALS									
2.400	1.500	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	6.1	11.47	9	5150	11013	2.13	0.05
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS									
2.220	1.550	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	10.6	4.55	19	11100	24679	2.22	0.02
7.500	3.200	VEHICLES OWNERS FED.	12.5	3.95	1	100	304	3.20	0.16
1.090	900	TARKA PORTFOLIO	43.1	0.00	3	750	810	1.08	0.08
1.830	1.510	UNIFIED CO.	6.5	7.53	34	10750	15928	1.52	0.06
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS									
4.450	2.690	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	17.3	3.77	20	6301	18523	2.89	0.03
11.160	9.200	JOR. PETROL/REFINERY	10.6	8.12	1	8681	95689	10.87	0.08
6.700	4.500	JORDAN TANNING	8.8	7.27	3	252	1386	5.55	0.05
1.450	1.040	WOOLLEN INDUSTRIES	12.6	6.90	3	600	874	1.45	0.05
2.320	1.100	INDUSTRIAL CONGR. AGR.	9	0.00	2	339	407	1.25	0.05
5.700	3.440	ARAB PHARM. IND.	14.0	3.72	91	34250	184548	5.27	0.1
1.530	1.020	JOR. PIPES MANFACT.	11.1	7.46	4	2850	3835	1.34	0.1
1.420	0.770	RAFIA INDUSTRIES	9	0.00	3	8500	6395	78	0.02
6.350	4.400	DAR ALDINAH DV. INV.	7.0	5.98	2	69	404	5.85	0.05
570	400	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9	0.00	51	69250	3507	50	0.05
1.110	0.70	ARAB PAPER CONV. TRD.	21.7	0.00	7	13750	9724	70	0.01
620	510	NATIONAL INDS.	9	0.00	2	6000	3240	55	0.02
810	370	INVERSHED PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	28	26580	10224	40	0.02
690	500	JOR. ROCKWELL INDS.	9	0.00	2	12000	6560	55	0.02
2.240	1.380	UNIV. CHEM. INDS.	14.2	5.76	4	350	482	1.42	0.03
3.000	920	NATL. CABLE WIRE. MFAC	27.4	0.00	9	8900	10147	1.14	0.01
780	510	JOR. SILICO. CHEM.	9	0.00	4	1200	686	57	0.01
1.560	1.150	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	14.7	4.51	8	1701	2256	1.36	0.03
1.540	810	UNIV. WOVEN INDS.	14.4	6.67	9	3500	3150	92	0.02
1.230	680	JOR. INDS. RESOURCES	9.1	14.71	19	10922	7446	68	0.02
1.620	1.350	NATL. CELLULOSE	10.2	6.85	6	2300	3358	1.47	0.01
1.080	810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	14.2	9.90	7	6513	6845	1.02	0.01
2.750	1.250	EL - FAY READY WEAR	48.2	0.00	3	700	961	1.34	0.03

No FIFA split after tense elections — Johansson

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — UEFA President Lennart Johansson said here Tuesday the bitter two-way battle for the presidency of FIFA would not split the world football body.

"I will respect the result of the vote. I will behave as I always have, and I will also see to it that my colleagues in the executive committee do the same," he said.

"I can only speak for myself and the people I represent. I cannot talk about democracy and then disobey the result of the election," he added.

Johansson said he would work with Sepp Blatter, the ruling body's general secretary, should he win.

"If my opponent is elected I have to respect that," he said.

"This is the way I am going to act even in FIFA, whether I am elected or not," the UEFA president said.

"I have no intention whatsoever to

create some sort of a wall.

The situation is bad enough as it is with two European candidates," he went on.

Johansson, who earlier met Asian Football Confederation (AFC) president Sultan Ahmad Shah and the AFC executive committee, is in Malaysia to drum up support for his bid.

But he added: "I am not good in lobbying."

The Swede is involved in a fight with Blatter to succeed Joao Havelange as FIFA president.

Johansson is scheduled to visit Singapore and Hong Kong on a similar mission. He is accompanied by UEFA vice-president Antonio Matarrese.

Johansson said he welcomed the decision by Blatter to take an eight-week leave-of-absence to contest the election.

"I think it is a fair decision. I con-

gratulate him for that," he said.

Blatter's decision to temporarily stand down came after furious protests from Johansson and his backers.

The UEFA president wanted Blatter to resign immediately on announcing his candidature in Paris last month.

The election scheduled at the FIFA Congress in Paris on June 8, two days before the start of the World Cup.

Voting is open to all 198 national associations of FIFA, except Palestine, who are only provisional members.

Meanwhile, in Bogota, the Colombian federation president Alvaro Fina said the South American countries would back Blatter.

"We see him as being able to continue the work of Joao Havelange," Fina said.

Bergkamp calls the shots as Gunners blitz Blackburn

LONDON (AFP) — Dennis Bergkamp made a dramatic return from suspension as Arsenal continued their surge towards the top of the English Premiership with a crushing 4-1 win at Blackburn on Monday.

The Dutch striker struck a stunning goal after just 75 seconds to set the Gunners on the way to a handsome win that lifted them to within one point of leaders Manchester United with two games in hand.

Bergkamp also created two goals for Ray Parlour in the seventh and 15th minutes as Arsene Wenger's double-chasers tore apart the Blackburn defence in the opening exchanges.

Frenchman Nicolas Anelka, who scored twice against in Saturday's 3-1 win over Newcastle, continued the rout with a coolly-taken goal for Arsenal's fourth on 42 minutes.

Blackburn grabbed a consolation goal six minutes into the second half when Scotland star Kevin Gallacher lashed a volley into the back of the net from eight yards.

Bergkamp, though, showed why he was recently voted English football's player of the year when he fired the Gunners into an early lead against the last team to beat them in the league — four months ago.

The former Ajax and Inter Milan ace raced clear of the Blackburn defence from a throw-in on the right and drilled a fierce, low shot across goal into the far corner.

Five minutes later, he turned creator when he released Parlour with a perfectly judged pass, allowing the England World Cup



Arsenal striker Nicolas Anelka is tackled by Blackburn Rovers defender Colin Hendry and Jeff Kenna (L). The match is part of the FA Premiership title race (Reuters photo).

hopeful to spring the offside trap and squeeze a shot under keeper Alan Fittis.

Arsenal were virtually home and dry after just seven minutes but they continued their assault on the visitors goal and scored a third goal on 15 minutes.

Again Bergkamp was at the centre of action, firing a powerful drive which goalkeeper Alan Fittis managed to beat out only for the ball to fall to the unmarked Parlour, who crashed his second into the roof of the net.

The demolition continued shortly before half-time when Nigel Winterburn released Anelka with a superb ball from deep.

The 19-year-old, deputising for the injured Ian Wright, used his electric pace to get away from Blackburn's shell-shocked defence before rounding Fittis and slotting his eighth goal of the season.

The second half of the game was played in unseasonal snow.

In other matches, England captain Alan Shearer grabbed a last-gasp winner as Newcastle bagged three vital points with a 2-1 win over fellow strugglers Birmingham.

Kenny Dalglish's side looked to be heading for a

draw when Shearer rose above the Barnsley defence to crash home an unstoppable header from Rob Lee's cross with just three minutes left on the clock.

Earlier, Swedish international striker Andreas Andersson fired his first goal for Newcastle since joining the Magpies from AC Milan in January.

But Barnsley grabbed an equaliser through Jan Aage Fjortoft, before Shearer threw Newcastle a lifeline in their fight against the drop with his dramatic late intervention.

Fellow fallen giants Tottenham remain deep in relegation trouble, though, after they were denied a richly-deserved win in the dying minutes of their home game against mid-table Coventry.

Spurs dominated the game and deservedly took the lead when former Italian international Nicola Bertinotti headed home a header from David Ginola's corner in the 68th minute.

But with just four minutes to go Coventry's Dion Dublin stunned the home fans with an equaliser against the run-of-play.

Liverpool boosted their points to 36 by booking a place in the European Champions' League by

closing the gap on title rivals Manchester United and Arsenal with a 2-1 win over Crystal Palace.

An 85th-minute winner from substitute David Thompson — his first league goal — secured all three points for Roy Evans' side and left Palace rock bottom of the table and facing almost certain relegation after just one season back in the top flight.

Derby ended their goal drought in style as they crushed relegation-haunted Bolton 4-0 at Pride Park.

Jim Smith's men had gone into the game on the back of four matches without a goal, but goals from Dean Burton (two), Paulo Wanchope and Francesco Baiano rekindled their UEFA Cup hopes.

Sheffield Wednesday came from behind to grab a point in a 1-1 draw at home to West Ham.

Israeli star Eyal Berkovic gave West Ham a seventh-minute lead before Northern Ireland ace Jim Magilton grabbed a second, half equaliser against the run of play to ease Wednesday's relegation fears.

In the day's other match, Wimbledon and Everton battled to a goalless stalemate at Selhurst Park.

Matsuoka finishes his career at Japan Open tennis

TOKYO (AFP) — Local hero Shuzo Matsuoka bowed out after a 13-year professional career in tennis with a straight-sets defeat to Ivo Heuberger at the Japan Open tennis tournament Tuesday.

Matsuoka, the best male tennis player Japan has produced, failed to revive his golden days, losing his first-round match to the 22-year-old Swiss 3-6, 3-6 in 80 minutes.

Rain postponed matches on the outside courts, forcing the organizers to close the roof of the Ariake Coliseum centre court.

Earlier in the day, sixth-seeded Wang Shi-ting of Taiwan cut the challenge from Japan's Shinobu Asaboe for a 3-6, 6-3, 6-1 win in the women's first round.

"I was very disappointed," said Matsuoka, 30. "I felt

I'm in really good shape and I had expected to reach higher rounds here. I just found I'm a player who always becomes nervous in such an important match."

Matsuoka's serve and volley game, which once saw off former world number ones Pete Sampras and Stefan Edberg, collapsed in the very opening game, and the Japanese was unable to recover from the deficit.

He failed to convert a single break chance out of eight break points — twice a triple chance at 0-40 in the second game and again in the first game of the second set, while Heuberger won his three break chances.

Matsuoka announced in August he would retire after the Japan Open, following a poor performance at Wimbledon last year, where he failed to survive the qualifying round.

"The most memorable tournament for me is the Wimbledon. I reached the quarter-finals in 1995," said Matsuoka.

"But the Japan Open was the biggest stepping stone for me. In 1988, I defeated Miloslav Mecir (1986 US Open finalist from the Czech Republic), who was ranked seventh then, and I played John McEnroe.

"The Japan Open really helped me to move up in the world that year," said Matsuoka, who reached 46th in July 1992.

Matsuoka said he is going to start a new life, helping young players to improve and to expand the sport in the country, partly through two \$15,000 Futures tournaments his new company is to host in Osaka and Fukuoka later this year.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Sturm Graz seal title

VIENNA (AFP) — Sturm Graz downed Austria Vienna 5-0 on Monday to seal the Austrian League title with seven rounds of matches still remaining. The win lifted Sturm are 22 points ahead of their local rivals and nearest challengers Graz AK. In 29 matches so far this season, Sturm have recorded 21 wins, seven draws and just a single defeat.

Irish eventer killed in fall

NAVAN, Ireland (AFP) — Ireland's leading event rider David Foster was fatally injured in a fall at a show near his home in County Meath on Monday. The former army captain was dead on arrival at Navan Hospital after receiving attention from two doctors at the scene. First to go in the cross country phase, Foster suffered massive head and chest injuries when his mount turned over on top of him at the water jump, the sixth obstacle. Foster enjoyed considerable success at international-level eventing and represented Ireland at Olympics.

Newcastle appoint top PR man to repair battered image

NEWCASTLE (AFP) — Newcastle United announced Tuesday that they have brought in a leading public relations figure to improve the club's image in the wake of a series of damaging scandals.

Alistair Wilson, who will be responsible for communications and public affairs, said he hopes he can repair the English Premiership giant's battered reputation.

Newcastle fans are still reeling from allegations surrounding disgraced former directors Freddie Shepherd and Douglas Hall.

The pair quit the Magpies board last month following revelations about their behaviour in a national newspaper that enraged the club's supporters.

The News of the World alleged that Shepherd and Hall mocked fans for buying

expensive replica shirts, bragged about sexual exploits with prostitutes, said local Newcastle girls were 'dogs', referred to star player Alan Shearer as Mary Poppins and boasted they had fooled Manchester United over the seven million pound (\$10.5 million) transfer of Andy Cole.

Wilson, who retired from his post as managing director of Newcastle Breweries to take up the newly created role within the club, described his position as marketing the club within the community and the fans.

The 57-year-old said: "I will be liaising between the football club and the community, of which I'm delighted to be a part, and believe I can improve the perception of the club."

SCOREBOARD

Spanish League

Betis Seville 2

Sporting Gijon 1

National League

San Francisco 8

St. Louis 2

Philadelphia 11

Atlanta 8

Florida 7

Pittsburgh 2

San Diego 1

Arizona 0

Colorado 8

Cincinnati 4

Los Angeles 3

Houston 1

American League

Boston 6

Oakland 3

Cleveland 6

Seattle 5

Tampa Bay 13

Minnesota 12

Kansas City 11

Toronto 1

Texas 10

Detroit 1

NBA

Indiana 114

Chicago 105

LA Lakers 99

San Antonio 75

Phoenix 105

Golden State 97

Minnesota 107

LA Clippers 88

English Premiership

Blackburn 1

Arsenal 4

Derby 4

Bolton 0

Liverpool 2

Crystal Palace 1

Newcastle 2

Barnsley 1

Sheff Wed 1

West Ham 1

Tottenham 1

Coventry 1

Wimbledon 0

Everton 0

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<p>PHILADELPHIA '1'</p> <p>Morgan, Freeman & Ashley Judd ... in</p> <p>KISS THE GIRLS</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p>PHILADELPHIA '2'</p> <p>Yusra & Ilham Shahin ... in</p> <p>DANTELLA (ARABIC)</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p>PLAZA</p> <p>The biggest cinema production</p> <p>TITANIC</p> <p>Shows: 12:00, 3:00, 7:00, 10:30 p.m.</p>	<p>CONCORD</p> <p>ISMAILIA RAYEH GAI - KAMANANA</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30</p> <p>Adel Imam & Yusra ... in</p> <p>RISALA ILA AL WALI</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 7:00, 9:00, 11:00</p>	<p>GALLERIA 2</p> <p>ABDOUN</p> <p>GRAND OPENING</p> <p>TITANIC</p> <p>Shows: 11:00, 2:00, 5:15, 8:30, 12:00</p>	<p>GALLERIA 1</p> <p>ABDOUN</p> <p>GRAND OPENING</p> <p>TITANIC</p> <p>Shows: 3:30, 7:00, 10:30</p> <p>The film is also on at 12:00 a.m. on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays</p>	<p>Hisham Yanes Theatre</p> <p>TEL: 4625155</p> <p>STARTING APRIL 6TH</p> <p>Don't Laugh Please We're Jordanian</p> <p>Starring Hisham Yanes, Amal Dabbas, Rania Kurdi and the group</p> <p>at 8:30 p.m.</p> <p>For reservations call: 4640155, 4625155</p>
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1st Division Basket

Ahli take on O

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Al Ahli meet Al Othobani tonight in the second match of the First Division Basketball playoffs.

Championship playoffs conclude May 1 after losing to the two top teams. Al Ahli are currently third and their opponents rest upon taking a number up spot after a number out of contention for the title.

Al Ahli beat Al Othobani in the first play-off match of the two-round series.

Al Ahli now need to win the first two matches to reach the final.

	P	W	L
Al Ahli	11	10	1
Al Othobani	10	9	1
Al Ahli	11	6	5

Pacers upset

CHICAGO (AP) — Reggie Miller and Jalen Rose scored 22 points each, and the Indiana Pacers forced the Chicago Bulls to a 101-99 overtime loss Tuesday night.

The loss, just the fourth in 40 games, for the Bulls, who have won 14 of 15 games since the start of the season, hurts their chances of having a league's best overall record and homecourt advantage throughout the playoffs.

Chicago is 60-19 overall, 31-9 for Utah.

The Pacers (56-23), meanwhile, moved one game ahead of Miami in the race for the No. 2 seed in the Eastern Conference.

The Bulls already have missed the top spot in the East.

Samuel Phippen scored 28 points and Jordan, who got emotional for throwing the ball at Indiana's Mark Price, had 27 — including 10-of-14 at the line.

Indiana 99, Spurs 75: In the Antonio, Shaquille O'Neal had 28 points and rebounds to lead Los Angeles to a fight-marred victory over the cold-shooting Spurs.

The Lakers leading 84-78 in the fourth quarter, the game was halted.

George McPhee and his team were upset by the Bulls in the first round of the playoffs.

The Bulls, who are 60-19 overall, 31-9 for Utah.

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Evaluates and assesses language progress and final proficiency of learners; monitors and evaluates a study demonstrated by language.

Establishes and fosters ongoing Jordan-based language teaching and develops a long-term language teaching programme for Peace Corps Volunteers.

Required:

Degree in language education and/or experience in language teaching.

A minimum of three years of language experience (any language); using of methods.

Total fluency in written and spoken English.

Supervisory teaching experience.

Willingness to work for extended periods in a mid-level technical staff position.

Interested candidates should submit a curriculum vitae and cover letter no later than April 25, 1998.

1st Division Basketball Championship Ahli take on Orthodoxi tonight

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Al Ahli meet Al Orthodoxi tonight in the second match of the First Division Basketball Championship playoffs which conclude May 1.

After losing to the two other top teams, Al Ahli are currently third and their ambitions rest upon taking the runner up spot after being ruled out of contention for the title.

Al Ahli beat Al Ahli 78-63 in the first playoff match of the two-round event.

Al Ahli now need to

win the rest of their matches to retain the title they won last year.

Al Ahli had beat Al Orthodoxi 92-84 and Al Ahli 75-69 in the first round which they ended with an unbeaten streak. However, they could only manage a dismal 57-53 win over Al Ahli and lost their only match to Al Orthodoxi 73-69 in the second round.

Last season's runners up Al Ahli are suffering the ill-effects of inadequate pre-season training which led to an inconsistent form. They started training late as they were busier tackling technical obstacles like recruiting

a coach and luring back veterans to the lineup.

Al Orthodoxi finished third last year but have demonstrated that they were in better shape to resume their dominance of the game.

Al Ahli ended a 30-year domination among the two rivals last season. Prior to that Al Orthodoxi had an undisputed reign from 1976-1989, but Al Ahli won the title in 1990, 1992, 1993 and 1994 aided by the signing of Naser Bushnaq.

Al Orthodoxi came back to win in 1991, 1995 and 1996.

Fabled Yankee stadium closes for repairs

NEW YORK (AFP) —

Yankee stadium — perhaps the most venerated arena in baseball — was forced to close this week, after a 500-pound hunk of steel fell from the ceiling into the left-field stands.

The steel fragment fell into the stands Monday, about five hours before the Bronx Bombers were scheduled to host the California Angels.

The stadium, which turns 75 years old this week, was empty at the time.

"If somebody had been there at the time the beam came down that person would now be dead," said New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani.

The seat on which the beam fell was crushed, and there was a 6-inch crater in the concrete. New York City, the Yankees' landlord, ordered the Bronx, New York-arena closed to the public until it is determined there are no further structural defects.

Officials canceled Tuesday's game against the Angels and said Wednesday's matchup might have to be played across town at Shea Stadium — home of New York's rival hometown baseball team, the Mets.

The incident gives ammunition to those who have lobbied for the construction of a new stadium, perhaps in Manhattan.

"Something like this shouldn't happen," Giuliani conceded. "It does indicate the stadium is old."

Juventus and Real Madrid look in command

PARIS (AFP) — Juventus and Real Madrid — two of the greatest names in European football — look to be set for a European Cup final showdown.

Both clubs defend comfortable leads from the first legs in Wednesday's semi-final return matches against under-strength opponents.

Defending champions Borussia Dortmund, who went down 2-0 to Real at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium two weeks ago after crowd trouble delayed the start by 75 minutes, are without three suspended players — defender Julio Cesar, midfielder Steffen Freund and striker Heiko Herrlich.

Swiss international striker Stephane Chapuisat is also in doubt after complaining of tired muscles against Kaiserslautern last Thursday.

The only good news for the German side is the return of midfielders Andy Moller and Jorg Heinrich, who both missed the first leg match with injuries.

Dortmund must rally if they are to play in Europe next season — they have virtually no chance of a UEFA Cup slot.

"Our chances of reaching the final are 50-50," said coach Nevio Scala, in optimistic mood.

Scala will make a late decision on whether Ghanaian striker Ibrahim Tanko, Lars Ricken or Dutchman Harry Decheiver partners Chapuisat in attack — if the Swiss international plays.

Decheiver has a broken toe and has been playing with pain-killing injections. "We know for sure he won't last

the whole match," said Scala.

Monaco, who crashed 4-1 at Juventus two weeks ago, will be without injured defenders Martin Djetou, Muhamed Konjic, Franck Dumas and Christophe Pignol as well as the suspended Francisco Da Costa, who scored their only goals in Turin. With Sylvain Legwinski and Japhet N'Doram long-term casualties and Ludovic Giuly not qualified for European play, they are severely depleted.

The Monaco team were visited at training Monday by Prince Albert, but it was at the same session that Djetou withdrew from the squad.

Monaco do welcome back Scottish international midfielder John Collins from suspension when they try to beat an Italian side in the semi-finals of a European Cup for the first time in four attempts.

Sampdoria, in the 1990 European Cup Winners' Cup, AC Milan in the 1994 Champions' Cup and Inter Milan, in the 1997 UEFA Cup, have all beaten Monaco in the past.

"But you can't abandon hope," said Monaco coach Jean Tigana, who is tipped to take over as French national coach when Aime Jacquet retires after the World Cup.

"We matched Juventus for most of the first match but for two doubtful penalties," he added.

Juventus midfielder and France captain Didier Deschamps, suspended for the return, admitted the Italian side had

been lucky with those two spot-kick awards.

"In those sort of cases referees often tend to go with the big side," said Deschamps, who is suspended for the return.

Juventus, with French midfielder star Zinedine Zidane on song, will be aiming to reach the final for the third straight year. The Italian club warmed up with a 2-0 Italian League win over Piacenza and got good news on Monday when goalkeeper Angelo Peruzzi, injured in that game, confirmed he would be fit to play.

Inter's Uruguayan defender Paolo Montero is likely to be out of action with a groin strain.

Real Madrid, without suspended skipper Manuel Sanchis, are desperate to reach their first final since their sixth triumph in 1966, particularly now that they have as good as conceded the Spanish championship to Barcelona.

Borussia played the first leg of the semi-final under protest after the kick-off was delayed when a handful of the 90,000 fans burst through a broken fence behind one goal and dragged down the goal.

Goals from Fernando Morientes and French midfielder Christian Karembeu, with his third goal in as many European Cup games since his transfer from Sampdoria, earned Real Madrid their controversial first-leg win and their two-goal buffer will be difficult for Dortmund to overturn.

PLAYOFF STANDINGS						
Team	Pts	St	St	Sc	Sc	Pts
Jazireh	10	10	1	968	645	21
Orthodoxi	10	9	1	897	538	19
Ahli	10	6	5	735	684	17

Pacers upset Bulls in Chicago

CHICAGO (AP) — Reggie Miller and Jalen Rose scored 22 points each, and the Indiana Pacers forced Michael Jordan into 7-of-19 shooting, and beat the Chicago Bulls 114-105 Monday night.

The loss, just the fourth at home in 40 games for Chicago this season, hurts the Bulls' chances of having the league's best overall record and homecourt advantage throughout the playoffs.

Chicago is 60-19 overall to 59-19 for Utah.

The Pacers (56-23), meanwhile, moved one game ahead of Miami in the race for the No. 2 seed in the Eastern Conference. The Bulls already have clinched the top spot in the East.

Scottie Pippen scored 28 points and Jordan, who got a technical for throwing the ball at Indiana's Mark Jackson, had 27 — including 12-of-14 at the line.

Lakers 99, Spurs 75: In San Antonio, Shaquille O'Neal had 28 points and 16 rebounds to lead Los Angeles to a fight-marred victory over the cold-shooting Spurs.

With the Lakers leading handily in the fourth quarter, the game was halted

twice in less than 45 seconds for fighting.

Ejected were Will Perdue and Monty Williams for San Antonio, and Derek Fisher and Nick Van Exel for Los Angeles.

The first fight came with 4:46 remaining and resulted in the ejections of Perdue and Fisher, who tangled and exchanged pushes after Kobe Bryant's dunk shot. Van Exel and Williams were ejected for fighting 44 seconds late after a missed 3-point shot by Van Exel.

San Antonio, which played without injured David Robinson, was led by Tim Duncan with 26 points and 16 rebounds. The Spurs shot a season-low 31.0 percent from the field (26-for-84).

Suns 105, Warriors 97: In Oakland, California, George McCloud scored 23 points and the Suns won their season-high ninth straight.

Antonio McDyess added 22 points and Cliff Robinson had 21 for the Suns, who rallied from 16 points down early to sweep the four-game season series with the Warriors. Jason Kidd just missed a 19th career triple double, finishing with 16 points, 10 assists and nine rebounds.

Golden State, which has lost its last eight meetings with Phoenix, got 28 points from Jason Caffey, a career high. He also had 12 rebounds. Tony Delk added 21 points and Jim Jackson had 20.

Timberwolves 107, Clippers 88: In Los Angeles, Kevin Garnett scored 23 points and Anthony Peeler added 21 as Minnesota got its fifth straight victory and 10th in the last 13 games.

The Clippers drew within three after scoring the first seven points of the fourth quarter, but lost for the eighth consecutive game despite 23 points and a career-high 17 rebounds from Lamond Murray.

Stephon Marbury and Sam Mitchell added 14 points each and Cherokee Parks 10 as the Wolves had all five starters in double figures.

The Wolves, who've already clinched their second straight playoff berth, are assured of finishing with a .500 record for the first time since joining the NBA in 1989.

The U.S. Peace Corps in Jordan is seeking suitably qualified candidates for the long-term contractual position of Arabic Language Coordinator.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Develops Arabic language learning materials and training courses for adult foreigners.
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- Provides lead in structuring, implementing and managing an intensive 12 week introductory Arabic language and cultural training program.
- Creates and applies more advanced materials for supplementary independent language acquisition to cover a two year period.
- Evaluates and assesses language learning progress and final proficiency level attained by learners; monitors and evaluates teaching proficiency demonstrated by language teachers.
- Establishes and fosters ongoing contact with Jordan based language teaching institutions and develops a long-term language materials and teaching programme for Peace Corps Volunteers.

Required:

- Degree in language education and actual experience or strong interest in curriculum development.
- A minimum of three years of language teaching experience (any language) using communicative methods.
- Total fluency in written and spoken Arabic and English.
- Supervisory teaching experience preferred.
- Willingness to work for extended periods outside Amman (e.g. Irbid, Karak).

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Baghdad, Beirut working to restore ties — official

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq and Lebanon could soon restore diplomatic relations which were broken off in 1994, the leader of a Lebanese delegation of manufacturers said here Tuesday.

"As soon as we return to Beirut, the Lebanese delegation will work towards this end," Jacques Sarraf, president of Lebanon's manufacturers' association, told a press conference.

The moves already under way point to the reestablishment [soon] of diplomatic relations," Mr. Sarraf told a press conference.

He said that Iraq's

ambassador to Amman, Nuri Al Weiss, was currently in Beirut to inspect the Iraqi embassy. His Lebanese counterpart in the Jordanian capital visited Baghdad last year.

Lebanon broke off diplomatic relations with Iraq in 1994 following the assassination of an Iraqi opposition figure in Beirut.

Mr. Sarraf's delegation met Iraqi Industry Minister Adnan Abdul Majid on Monday for talks on boosting trade between the two countries, particularly contracts under the U.N. "oil-for-food" accord.

The accord allows Iraq, which has been under a

U.N. embargo since it invaded Kuwait in 1990, to sell limited quantities of crude to finance imports of humanitarian goods.

Mr. Sarraf also visited Baghdad last year at the start of a normalisation of relations between Iraq and Syria, which is the main power-broker in Lebanon.

Before the break in relations between Iraq and Lebanon, more than 60 per cent of goods transiting the port of Beirut were headed for Baghdad, according to Lebanon's chamber of commerce and industry.

Iraq informs U.N. it rejects U.K. plans for 'oil-for-food' forum

BAGHDAD (AFP) — The Iraqi government has informed the United Nations of its rejection of British plans to host an international conference on the distribution of humanitarian supplies in Iraq.

The official news agency INA said Iraq's ambassador to the U.N., Nizar Hamdoun, informed Secretary-General Kofi Annan that Baghdad "officially rejects" the holding of such a conference.

"The British initiative amounts to flagrant interference in the internal affairs of Iraq," he told Mr. Annan. The move came after the Iraqi parliament on Saturday charged that the British plan was aimed at prolonging the U.N. embargo which has been in force since Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

"The British proposal reveals the hypocrisy and hostility of the British government toward the Iraqi people," the parliament said.

British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook called in March for an international conference to study ways to allocate increased humanitarian aid to Iraq and to evaluate the needs of the Iraqi population.

The Security Council in February raised the amount of oil which Baghdad is authorised to sell every six months to purchase humanitarian supplies from two billion dollars to \$5.2 billion.

Police break up rally in support of embattled Tehran mayor

TEHRAN (AFP) — Police broke up a student demonstration Tuesday in support of Tehran's embattled mayor as Iran's conservative-led parliament held a rare closed-door session to discuss the moderate mayor's arrest on corruption charges.

Around 50 helmeted policemen wielding batons forcibly dispersed a crowd of some 300 students gathered in front of Tehran University to voice their backing for the government of President Mohammad Khatami and protest the April 4 arrest of Tehran Mayor Gholam-Hossein Karbaschi.

The students ran away as they saw the security forces approaching throwing tear-gas grenades, witnesses said. Many shops lining Enghelab (Revolution) Avenue, where the university is located, closed their doors.

Two or three people were arrested, according to witnesses. The students had shown up despite appeals from President Khatami's cabinet not to hold the rally.

"Our society needs calm and restraint more than anything," the cabinet said in a statement Sunday intended to defuse the tension prompted by the arrest of Mr. Karbaschi, a prominent supporter of the moderate president during his election campaign last year.

A large contingent of police, plain-clothed secret agents and special anti-riot forces of the Revolutionary Guards were stationed in front of the university campus since the morning to prevent any gatherings.

Additional forces were seen

arriving during the day in several buses. The situation was tense, but there were no clashes.

A group of students gathered inside the campus planning to march to the interior ministry, where an exhibition has been set up in defence of the mayor, but were prevented by the forces from leaving the scene.

Pro-Khatami leftist students, who had called the demonstration, said earlier they would head the appeal from the government and called off the rally.

But various groups of people nevertheless arrived on the scene. Reformists supporting President Khatami have rallied behind the mayor, describing the charges of embezzlement and mismanagement pressed by the conservative judiciary as politically motivated and demanding his immediate release.

Before the cabinet's appeal for restraint, Interior Minister Abdollah Nouri, a leading supporter of the mayor, had reportedly authorised Tuesday's protest against the conservatives' agenda, including Mr. Karbaschi's arrest.

The left-wing Salam newspaper, which is close to radical students in universities, warned Tuesday that "self-restraint has a limit."

"If the present trend continues, people have a right to voice their support for their government of choice in appropriate ways," it said.

The conservatives have called for a thorough investigation of the scandal, insisting that Mr. Karbaschi remain in custody until his trial, reported

to be starting in a little over two weeks.

They have targeted Mr. Karbaschi's two main backers — Mr. Nouri and Culture Minister Abdollah Mobarajani — attacking them for their aggressive defence of the mayor at the expense of the judiciary.

Mr. Nouri, who has spearheaded a campaign to defend the mayor, will be summoned to parliament on Wednesday for a public hearing, after demands from a hardline MP, Ahmad Rasuli-Nejad, that he explain his conduct with respect to the affair.

Parliament met Tuesday to discuss Mr. Karbaschi's arrest but details were not immediately available from the unusual closed-door session.

Mr. Nouri, a moderate cleric, has angered the powerful conservative establishment with his attacks on the judiciary, prompting charges he was abusing his power base to protect a friend.

President Khatami himself has kept silent on the issue, but is reported to be active behind the scenes to secure the mayor's release.

The Tehran Times said the heads of the three branches of the government held new "lengthy" talks late Sunday with supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who is the only one with the power to overrule the court.

President Khatami "strongly" pleaded for the mayor's release, but Chief Justice Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi "opposed it on the grounds that Mr. Karbaschi's appeal had already been turned down by a higher court," the newspaper said.

Islamists call on U.K. to maintain asylum for Egyptian opposition

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian Islamists called on Britain to reject extradition requests by Cairo for Muslim militants who hope to transform their country into an Islamic state, according to a statement received here Tuesday.

"Don't repudiate the political asylum granted to opponents of the Egyptian government," the Islamic Observatory urged British Prime Minister Tony Blair in a letter.

The London-based organisation is headed by Yasser Serri, an activist of the Jihad "up" who was tried in Egypt and sentenced to death.

Mr. Blair is expected to visit Egypt Friday as part of his first tour of the Middle East.

According to the Egyptian government's demands will turn Britain into "the graveyard of human rights," the statement said.

The letter also demands that Mr. Blair "commit himself to not handing over anyone living on your territory who has not violated British law."

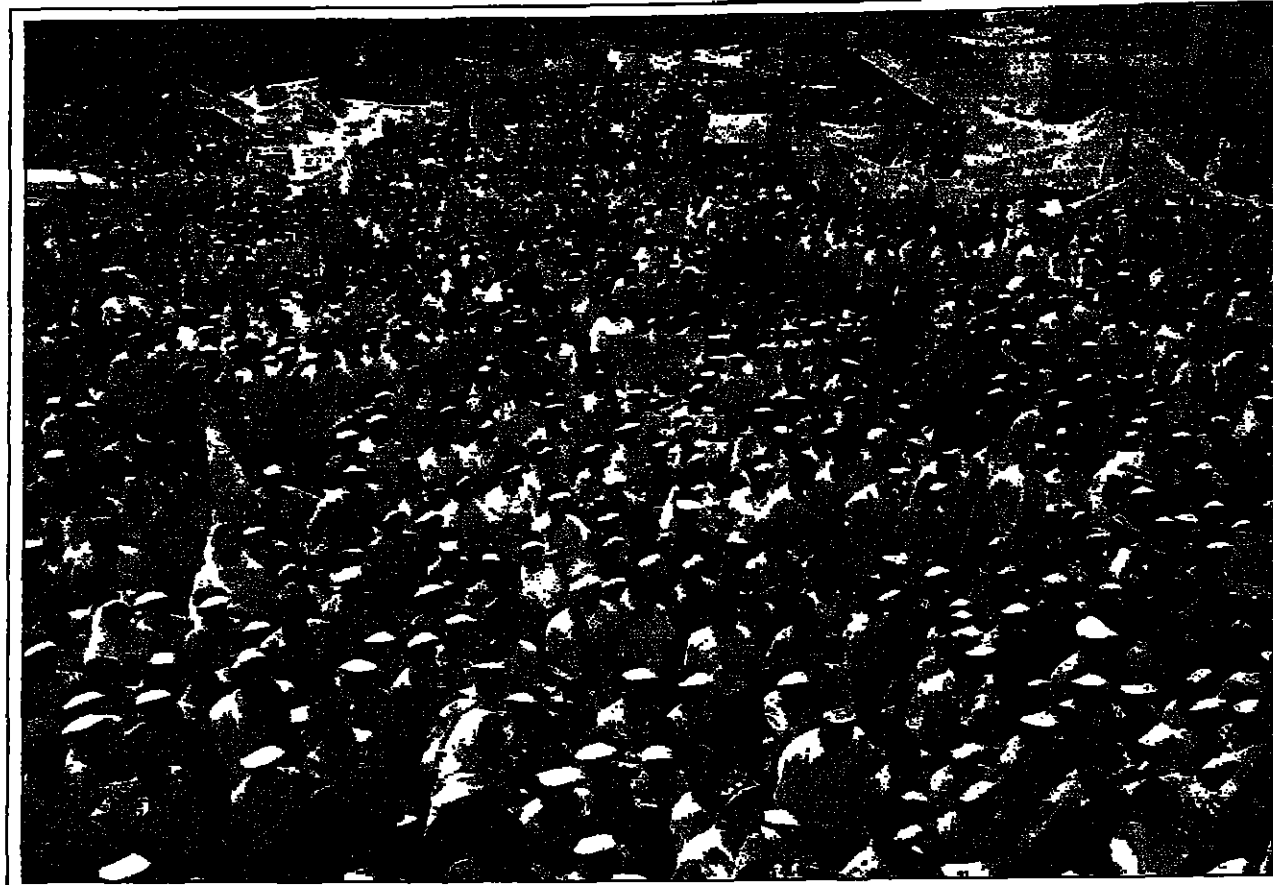
"We want you to insist that Britain is a country that respects human rights and international laws and conventions covering those who seek political asylum,"

it said. "Don't lend your ear to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak," the letter urged.

"Those who obtained asylum in your country respect it. All who entered your country securely can't betray you because that would be contrary to Islam."

The statement also called for "jailed political opponents to be released" and said that prisoners in Egypt are "mistreated."

Egypt has several times accused Britain of serving as a haven for Muslim militants, who launched a violent campaign against the government in 1992.



IN PROTEST OF CHILD LABOUR: About 5,000 children participate in a march protesting child labour Tuesday in Lahore. The Global March Against Child Labour which set off from Manila next Friday reached on Monday in Pakistan where millions of children work in sweatshops, steaming brick kilns and as bonded labourers paying off family debts (AP Photo)

Palestinian collaborator sues Israel for injuries

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A Palestinian who claims he was tortured and shot by fellow Arabs because he worked for the Israeli police has sued the Jewish state for damages, his lawyer said Tuesday.

In the suit filed in a Tel Aviv court this week, Ali Jaber, said he is permanently handicapped by injuries suffered in at least two murder attempts against him by Palestinians and in an accidental shooting by a fellow policeman.

"Even though he received citizenship in 1995, the police are not relating to him as a Jew," his lawyer, Nili Kaneti, told AFP. "He is psychologically and physically handicapped and they refuse to compensate him," she said.

Population increase in W. Bank's Jordan Valley settlements

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — The population in Jewish settlements in the West Bank's Jordan Valley has grown by 10 per cent in the past year and agricultural lands have been expanded to keep up with the influx, municipal leaders said Tuesday.

"There is intensive absorption and growth," said David Levy, head of the Jordan Valley Regional Council.

The Palestinians hope to establish a state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and have protested against the Israeli government's policy of expanding Jewish settlements in the Arab areas. The United States has asked Israel to freeze construction.

The increase in the 18 Jordan Valley settlements stood in stark contrast to the two per cent average growth rate of previous years.

Mr. Levy said that since the beginning of 1997, 60 new families have joined the 590 families already living in the valley which borders Jordan.

The Peace Now group which monitors settlement activity, estimated that the population in all the settlements in the West Bank and Gaza grew by nine per cent in 1997.

Mr. Levy denied an Israel radio report Tuesday that some of the Jordan Valley settlements had seized adjacent lands to expand.

Mr. Levy said all land used for agricultural expansion was within existing municipal boundaries.

Prosecutors order probe into death linked to PNA officers

RAMALLAH (AP) — Palestinian prosecutors said Tuesday they have ordered an investigation of the death of a Palestinian man whose bullet-riddled body was found less than an hour after he was summoned to Palestinian intelligence headquarters.

Mohammad Anqawi, a 37-year-old contractor from the West Bank village of Beit Seera, had been questioned in the past about allegations that he collaborated with Israel.

On April 6, Anqawi was summoned to the headquarters of Palestinian intelligence in the West Bank town of Ramallah.

According to the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group, Anqawi called a friend on his mobile phone at 1:20 p.m. that day to say that he was en route to the intelligence office and about 10 minutes away. Anqawi's body, riddled with nine bullets, was found 25 minutes later in a field about 2.5 kilometres away, said the director of the group, Bassem Eid.

Anqawi's car was found parked outside the intelligence office.

Mr. Eid said that although he lacked direct proof, he believed Anqawi was killed by people in the intelligence office run by Col. Tewfiq Tirawi who in the past has come under suspicion of ordering the killings of Palestinians believed to have sold land to Jews.

Col. Tirawi could not immediately be reached for comment Tuesday.

The deputy attorney general, Walid Adali, said the Ramallah prosecutor's office has been ordered to investigate the death.

The Palestinian National Authority has engaged in systematic human rights violations since it was formed in May 1994, according to Israeli, Palestinian and international human rights groups.

Offences include mistreatment of detainees, and according to Mr. Eid 20 Palestinians have died in jails in the West Bank and Gaza Strip since 1994. In addition, three suspected Palestinian land dealers were killed last year, Mr. Eid said.

Russia denies Israeli charges over Iran missile know-how

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russia on Tuesday firmly rejected Israeli accusations that Moscow has failed to halt missile technology transfers to Iran, an issue which continues to sour relations with Tel Aviv.

Foreign ministry spokesman Valery Nesterushkin said allegations made by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to the Russian daily Izvestia had no basis in fact.

Mr. Netanyahu told Tuesday's edition of the paper that he had urged Moscow "stop such activities" and that he had "issued certain instructions which we hope will be followed by practical deeds."

"We were assured that the Russian leadership is doing its utmost to prevent the leakage of rocket technologies to Iran. I hope the words will be backed by concrete steps," Mr. Netanyahu said.

But Mr. Nesterushkin said Tuesday the complaints were wide of the mark. "There is no cooperation whatsoever in the area of development of any technology which has anything to do with [the transfer of] missile technology to Iran."

"The appropriate bodies in Russia have tried to put a brake on all incidents of smuggling these technologies to Iran," he said.

The Federal Security Service had recently intervened to prevent the export of specialist steels to Iran which could have been used to manufacture ballistic missiles, he added.

The Russian authorities were taking steps to tighten export controls on dual use technologies, Mr. Nesterushkin said.

The Israeli premier told Izvestia that Iran would develop nuclear weapons within 18 months unless Russian assistance was terminated, adding that without Russian know-how Tehran would need 10 years to develop the same technology.

Hume: Majority will back Irish peace deal

BELFAST (R) — Irish Nationalist leader John Hume on Tuesday said he was convinced the vast majority of Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland would back an historic peace accord.

But a splinter group of Republican gunmen issued a chilling warning it would fight on against "British forces and those who target the Nationalist working class."

Mr. Hume, leader of the Social, Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), was one of the main architects of last Friday's accord which maintained Northern Ireland's links with Britain but built cross-border bridges with the Irish Republic.

"I have no doubt from my experience of recent times that it is the will of the vast majority of our people in both sections of our community to have lasting stability," he told Belfast's Irish News.

The deal, hammered out in 22 months of tortuous negotiations, is being put to referendums on both sides of the Irish border on May 22.

The main guerrilla groups on either side of the sectarian divide have declared cease-fires in the conflict that has claimed 3,200 lives in the past 30 years.

But splinter groups have kept up their campaigns, with police warning this could escalate in the lead-up to the referendums.

The Irish National Liberation Army, which split from the Irish Republican Army (IRA), warned it would keep up its bombings and shootings.

"What we will not and have not done is engage in a process that ignores Britain's centuries-old subjugation of the Irish nation," it said in a statement.

Protestant leader David Trimble could face a tough battle convincing colleagues within his Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) to back the accord.

Mr. Trimble, a fervent supporter of continued links with Britain, won backing by a 2-1 margin from the party executive. But only four of the 10 UUP members of the London parliament have come out in favour of the deal.

The peace process was given a boost on Easter Monday when the first Protestant parade of the marching season passed off without clashes.

The marchers, celebrating 300-year-old Protestant victories, by-passed a Belfast Nationalist enclave that has been a flashpoint for rioting in the past.

A special commission has been set up to rule on the contentious marches and its chairman appealed for calm in an interview with the London Times newspaper.

"There can be no better way for the people of Northern

Ireland to give the rest of the world a signal that they are serious about a new start than by working to ensure that parades don't dominate their lives and the television screens and the international press in the way they have for the past three years," Alastair Graham said.

The Northern Ireland peace settlement has won backing from Pope John Paul II to U.S. President Bill Clinton.

President Clinton has offered to visit Northern Ireland before the referendums but left the decision up to the prime ministers of Britain and Ireland and the parties involved in the deal.

"I don't want to do something to undermine the chances of success. I'm not a handicapper. I want to be encouraging it," the president said after meeting talks with Chairman George Mitchell, a former U.S. senator.

The deal could provide an economic bonanza for Northern Ireland, with the United States expected to provide up to \$100 billion in investment. One of the first peace dividends could be the building of a cross-community university on the ironically named "peace line" which divides Belfast's Protestants and Catholics. The \$100 million campus, to be constructed at the site of a past flashpoint, won warm support from both Unionists and Nationalists.



Something to make your four-legged friend even sweeter — ice cream

MUELHEIM (AFP) — For the dog who has everything, there is now something else to keep your favourite pooch pampered: a special ice cream for dogs. Available in either chocolate or vanilla flavour, Pfiffi Meisterer's comes in the shape of a dog's head and is being launched in the Tengelmann chain of shops in Berlin. The idea for the canine ice cream came to its inventor, Henry Wiczorek, when he saw dog owners letting their four-legged friends take surreptitious licks of their own ice creams under the table. With this in mind, Wiczorek created an ice cream for dogs with advice from veterinarians, reducing the sugar content to a level more suited to a dog's diet — though humans can eat the ice cream too.

Swede launches vodka meatballs

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — A Swedish woman living in the United States has launched vodka-flavoured meatballs, mixing two very Swedish concepts into a singular taste sensation, according to press reports. Ulla Nylin-Reinelt, who has lived in the United States for more than 20 years, launched vodka cheese a few years back. On the heels of the success of the Swedish vodka Absolut, U.S. imports of vodka cheese now total some 20 tonnes every month. Nylin-Reinelt has now decided to try her hand at meatballs. Flavoured with either black currants and vodka or red pepper and vodka, the cocktail meatballs, are made from her own recipe. Nylin-Reinelt also has plans to develop vodka pralines.

Philadelphia police on lookout for doorknob thief

PHILADELPHIA (R) — Police said they were trying to catch an unusually discriminating thief who has been swiping antique doorknobs from the front doors of homes in two of Philadelphia's older neighbourhoods. Since March 1, 15 incidents of disappearing doorknobs and doorbells have been reported in the Spruce Hill and Cedar Park sections of West Philadelphia, where many homes were built in the 19th century. Police believed the thefts were the work of a single thief who has been selling the doorknobs on a bustling black-market for antique hardware. Experts in antique home fixtures believe a doorknob thief would probably earn no more than \$5 or \$10 per item by selling to a middleman, who in turn would pass them on to out-of-town dealers at a much higher price. By the time the doorknobs reached the retail level, the items probably would fetch up to \$70 a piece.

Light fingers relieve blind singer of valuables

BOLOGNA (AFP) — Blind Italian singer Andrea Bocelli had his wallet and passport stolen as he gave a concert in a Rome church, forcing him to delay a tour in the United States. The performer, whose album "Romanza" has been a worldwide hit, was supposed to set off Monday for Los Angeles to record a song with Natalie Cole for the Warner Bros animated film "Quest For Camelot." But light fingers made off with his coat, containing his identity papers and wallet as he gave an Easter concert at a basilica adjoining Saint Paul's cathedral in front of thousands of spectators on Sunday.

WASHINGTON (AFP) — U.S. President Bill Clinton received a telephone call from King Hussein of Jordan on Monday for his role in reaching a peace agreement between Israel and Jordan. Clinton said the call was a "great honour" and that he was "proud" to be part of the peace process.

King names Princess Sumaya's newborn

AMMAN (AFP) — His Majesty King Hussein of Jordan named the baby girl born last month to Her Majesty Queen Alia Hassan and Prince Faisal bin Al Hussein, director general of Jordan Television and a member of the royal family, at a special ceremony held at the Jordanian Royal Palace. The newborn, Princess Sumaya, was named after the King's first wife, Queen Alia, who died in 1994. The King's first daughter, Princess Sumaya, was born in 1994.

Two Israeli soldiers wounded in Lebanon

BEIRUT (AFP) — Two Israeli soldiers on patrol in Lebanon were wounded in an attack by Hezbollah guerrillas in the town of Tyre. The soldiers were taken to a hospital in Tyre. Hezbollah is a Shiite Muslim militant group that has been fighting against Israeli occupation in Lebanon.

allows Reuters to enter Gaza

TEL AVIV (R) — The Israeli National Authority allowed the Gaza City 24-hour Reuters News Service to reopen on Tuesday after it had been closed for six days after it was accused of "violating" Palestinian national security laws. Reuters had been operating in Gaza for three months before it was closed. Reuters had been reporting on the situation in Gaza, which has been under Israeli occupation since 1967.

Iranian aid to Baghdad

TEHRAN (AFP) — A cargo plane filled with medical aid arrived in Baghdad on Tuesday. The aid was sent by Iran to help Iraq in its fight against the Gulf War. The aid included medical supplies and equipment.

hopes to open support

AMMAN (AFP) — The Jordanian Ministry of Health hopes to open a new hospital in Amman. The hospital is expected to be completed by the end of the year. It will provide medical services to the people of Amman.

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